Rotary pays respect to late Rotarian and Rotary Ann. PAGE 2
Taisacan moving NI forward with his plans. PAGE 3

Hafa Adai!

$1

Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

Volume XXXIII, Issue No. 207

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Number of business licenses go up

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

» Norita: Increase is a positive indicator of post-COVID economic recovery

Finance Secretary Tracy B. Norita disclosed yesterday that there has been an increase in the number of business licenses issued to business owners in the CNMI in fiscal year 2023 compared to the previous fiscal year.

Norita

See NUMBER on Page 4

Japan mayor to visit Saipan's Katori Shrine

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Saipan Mayor Ramon Blas "RB" Camacho with Katori City Mayor Tomonori Ito and the Saipan Awadori Team at the Katori City Hall during Camacho's visit to Japan last July.

By CHRYSTAL MARINO
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CORRESPONDENT

After a three-year hiatus due to the COVID-19 pandemic and to rekindle the traditional Shinto ceremony, a delegation from Japan that will be led by the Katori City mayor himself will be visiting the Saipan Katori Shrine at the Sugar King Park this Oct. 28 for the first in-person ceremony since 2019.

This was learned yesterday morning, in an announcement made during the Japanese

See JAPAN on Page 4

Marriott Saipan to open in 2025

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Hong Kong-based Honest Profit International Ltd., announced its partnership with Marriot International through a hotel management agreement signing ceremony yesterday at the Hyatt Regency Saipan Ballroom. During the signing ceremony, Honest Profit and Marriot International representatives announced the opening of the Marriot Resort Saipan anticipated in 2025.

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
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REPORTER

Marriott International, a multinational company that operates, franchises, and licenses luxury hotels across the globe, has announced its expansion to the CNMI and is expected to open the CNMI's first Marriott hotel in 2025.

Hong Kong-based Honest Profit International Ltd., announced yesterday

See MARRIOTT on Page 4

Ayuyu says politics may also be driving up prices on Tinian, Rota

» 'Comprehensive review needed to determine why select commodities are expensive

Ayuyu

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Businessman Jose C. Ayuyu, who is a newly-appointed member of the Commonwealth Ports Authority board, underscores the need to have a comprehensive review of why certain commodities are expensive on Tinian and Rota, believing that a lot of it is driven by politics.

Speaking at a confirmation

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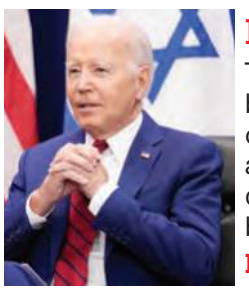
INSIDE

BUSINESS
Russian President Vladimir Putin is expected to meet this week with Chinese leaders in Beijing.
PAGE 11



NATION
The U.S. hoped to break a deadlock over delivering aid to increasingly desperate civilians in besieged Gaza.
PAGE 12

WORLD
Truckloads of aid idled at Egypt's border with Gaza as residents and humanitarian groups pleaded Monday for water, food and fuel for dying generators.
PAGE 13

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Local

Rotary pays respect to late Rotarian and Rotary Ann

By CHRYSTAL MARINO
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CORRESPONDENT

Members of the Rotary Club of Saipan briefly paused their weekly meeting at the Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan yesterday for a minute of prayers after the announcement of the passing of a Rotarian and Rotary Ann last week.

The club stood in prayer for the family and friends of the late Rotarian David L. Igitol and the wife of Rotarian David M. Sablan, Rita Castro Sablan. Both had been active in the Rotary Club, with Igitol as a member and double past president, and Sablan attending Rotary meetings alongside her husband, Rotary Club of Saipan double past president "Uncle Dave" Sablan, whenever she could.

Rotary president Irene Holl said in a later interview that Igitol was one of the Rotarians "who was in this club for a long time, just passing 45 years, so he memorized all the rules by heart and mind, and during meetings, if…any officer would make a mistake, he would call you out. …Those are the things we would miss 'cause he's always pointing out every rule and he's very keen on the things we should do."

Igitol

Sablan

She said that Igitol's passing last Friday came as a shock to them and that he will be missed.

As for Rita Sablan, Holl said that she always attended special events with her husband, David M. Sablan, who is a founding president of the club on Saipan, which he organized in 1965.

"Aunty Rita was very active in the club," said Holl. "…She used to come to a lot of activities—on Christmas or any special event. She would come. But…she wasn't able to come for the last few years. It's a sad week for Rotary because we lost two of our family members…We will miss both of them."

Japanese festival returns on Oct 28 at the Carolinian Utt

CHRYSTAL MARINO
Members of the Japanese Society of the Northern Mariana Islands met yesterday at the Office of the Mayor of Saipan in Susupe to finalize details for the 2023 Japanese Autumn Festival.

By CHRYSTAL MARINO
chrystal_marino@saipantribune.com
CORRESPONDENT

The Japanese Society of the Northern Mariana Islands is inviting the community to join them for a night to remember as they hold their 37th Japanese Autumn Festival this Oct. 28 at the Carolinian Utt in Garapan.

The society made the announcement official during their meeting yesterday morning at the Saipan Mayor's Office in Susupe.

The autumn festival will take place next week Saturday, beginning at 5pm until 9pm, and will feature exclusively Japanese food, games, and performances. The Favorite Lottery booth will offer a variety of exciting prizes, where participants may win TVs, Bluetooth speakers, Sony headphones, or various gift certificates from hotels, shops and restaurants. There will even be a garage sale from 4pm until 6pm.

Japanese Society of the Northern Mariana Islands vice chair Hiroko Tenorio, who was joined at yesterday's press briefing by society chair Seiji Sato, said that yesterday's meeting was meant to lock in the details for the event, such as what Japanese restaurants would be featured at the event and more.

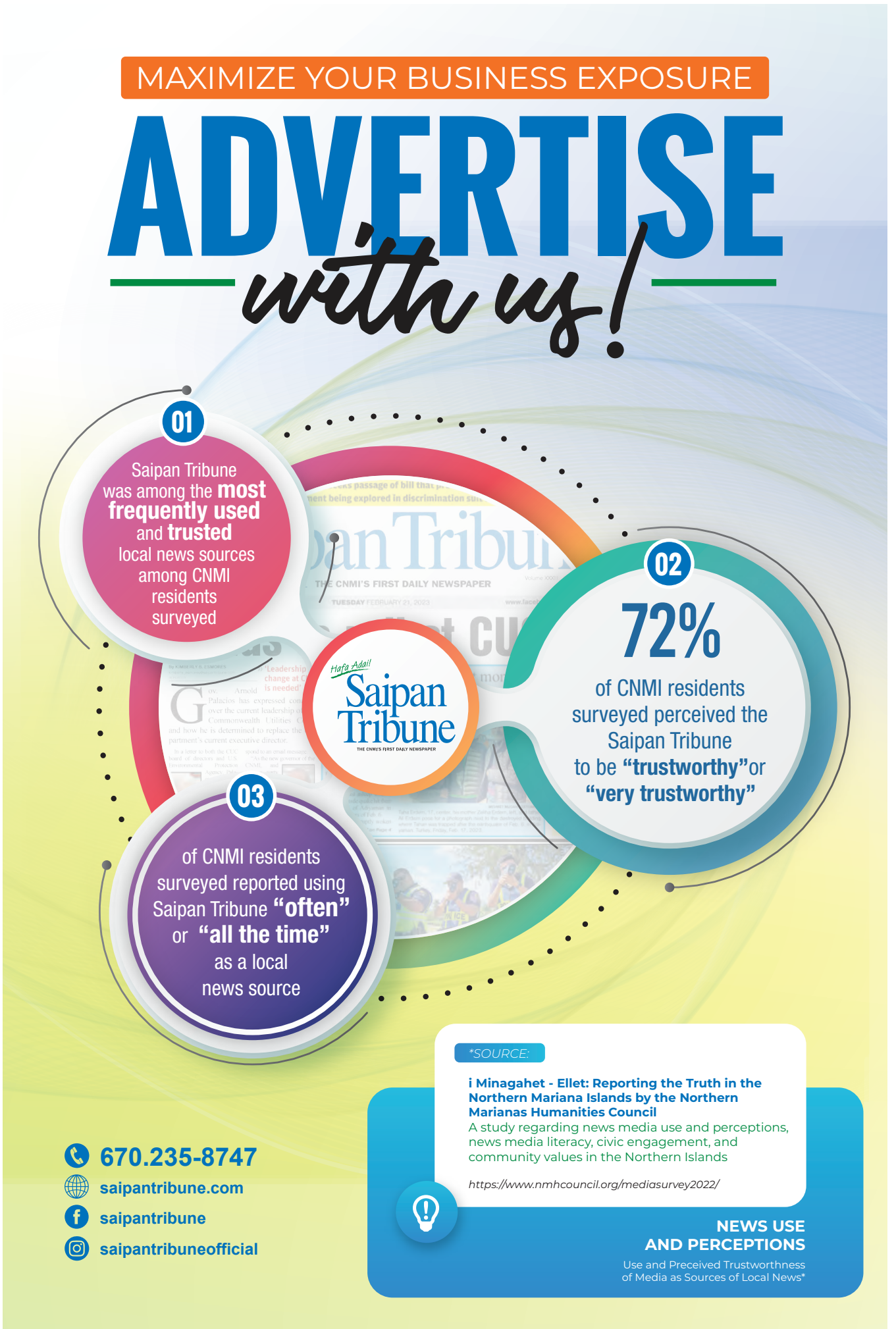
Many of the details will be released in the coming week, but Tenorio said the restaurants featured at the event will be serving Japanese staples.

"We have invited some of the entertainers from Japan that will perform on the stage, so we'll have Japanese food, Japanese entertainment, and Japanese games," she said, adding that resident students from Japanese clubs in local schools that are participating in the event will be demonstrating and teaching the games to guests.

Tenorio said a big part of the event is to support Japanese tourism in the CNMI. "…It's a little different than what the [Marianas Visitors Authority] is doing. …[Saipan Mayor Ramon "RB" Camacho] wants to target a niche market and we want to be a part of that," said Tenorio

"We understand that the Japanese market is still far from recovery," said Sato. "However, this year marks the first visit of the mayor of Katori City, Saipan's sister city, to join us and we are honored to have him and his staff, along with more than 30 visitors from Japan to witness our celebration. We are fully prepared to extend a warm welcome to all visitors to enjoy and experience our traditional food, games and stage performance."

In their official statement and press release, the Japanese Society of NMI "would also like to express its gratitude to all the members, local companies and some of the legislators who generously contributed to the success of the event. A special appreciation goes to the Saipan Mayor's Office for their efforts in maintaining and beautifying the Saipan Katori Shrine at the Sugar King Park as well as to the Marinas Visitors Authority for extending warm welcome to our Japanese guests."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02
72%
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03
of CNMI residents surveyed reported using Saipan Tribune "often" or "all the time" as a local news source
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A study regarding news media use and perceptions, news media literacy, civic engagement, and community values in the Northern Islands
https://www.nmhcouncil.org/mediasurvey2022/
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Taisacan moving NI forward with his plans

By LEIGH GASES
leigh_gases@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

After almost a year in office, Northern Islands Mayor Valentino N. Taisacan Jr. is moving forward with his plans for the CNMI's northernmost islands.

In an interview at his office on Capital Hill last week, Taisacan gave a brief overview of the status of the Northern Islands after Typhoon Bolaven and what he himself has accomplished so far as its mayor.

He said even before the typhoon, he was in constant communication with Anatahan, Agrigan, Pagan, and Alamagan's 196 residents and was informed that they were safe and secure.

When asked how these residents will prepare for future typhoons, Taisacan said that there are concrete structures on the three islands where they can take shelter.

Earlier this year, internet connectivity was supposed to be established on Alamagan, Agrigan, and Pagan by Kacific Satellite Broadband, but it did not happen due to funding issues. Taisacan is thankful, though, for Kacific's efforts and for the idea of connecting the Northern Islands to the internet.

Alternatively, Taisacan reached out to Glen Hunter, special assistant of the CNMI broadband program, to bring WiFi to the three islands via the program. Taisacan said it will be at no cost to his office and that it may come into fruition by the end of next year.

Taisacan said internet connection is important in the Northern Islands for better and more reliable communication and for students who want to do distance learning during their summer visits—or even during the school year.

Meanwhile, Taisacan's office budget from his predecessor, which was halfway through fiscal year 2023, was about $400,000. He said it is now down to about $385,000.

"It's really hard to operate without a big budget. Everything within that budget there was no operations. It just covers personnel and utilities," said Taisacan. The operations include the trip to and from the islands. He hopes to get more funding from the government to assist with his operations.

Taisacan was also elected chairman of the Planning and Development Advisory Council under the Office of Planning and Development. He said there is a five-year and a 10-year plan for infrastructure, internet, food sustainability, and economic activity, among others for the islands.

Taisacan also plans to meet with Public Lands Secretary Teresita A. Santos to discuss the designated public lands on the islands. "Most of these islands are designated as public lands and, as a mayor, I'm kind of concerned. There will be grants I'll be applying for, and with most of these grants, part of it [asks] whether we own the land or not. So before even applying, I think I need to get a deed or maybe a conveyance from DPL assigning it to the Northern Island mayor," he said.

He added, "We've had some agricultural lots, too, that I want to follow up. What's the status? I know they've surveyed Pagan and they came up with 84-88 lots and I just want to see the update on how many people have applied, and what's the status of the other islands too."

About the grants he's applied for so far, Taisacan said, "I haven't really submitted applications because I know by next year, there will be opening of some grants from [the Environmental Protection Agency] and solid waste. Of course, if there's people, there's going to be trash. So, that's part of my goal, to get a solid waste grant to see how I can bring them back to Saipan or have a solid waste structure out there."

On how it's being handled right now, he said they are environmentally conscious so the things that can be burned—besides plastics and cans—they'll burn. The rest will be brought back to Saipan for disposal. "Every three months, they bring back trash, but there's not that many people out there right now, so about 15 to 20 trash bags from each island."

At the end of this month, Taisacan hopes to hold a townhall meeting where Northern Islands residents can voice their concerns and express their thoughts. He also wants to present his plans and get their input on it. "It's important to get their input because it's their lives that are affected, so it's good to involve your people," said Taisacan.

LEIGH GASES

Northern Islands Mayor Valentino Taisacan is shown in this file photo.

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THE NORTHERN ISLANDS
COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
Caller Box 10007, Capitol Hill Ascencion Ct.
Saipan, MP 96950
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LEIGH GASES

Office of the Northern Islands Mayor on Capital Hill as seen on Friday morning after an interview with Northern Islands Mayor Valentino Taisacan.

House OKs report to re-appropriate $503.9K for Obyan Road repair

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The House of Representatives has adopted the Ways and Means Committee's report that recommends transmitting to the Saipan and Northern Islands Legislative Delegation a local bill that would re-appropriate $503,900 for the reconstruction and repair of Obyan Road.

Benavente

House Local Bill 23-25 aims to re-appropriate $204,500 allotted under Saipan Local Law 20-26; $190,000 allotted under Saipan Local Law 20-26; and $109,400 allotted under Saipan Local Law 21-07.

A Ways and Means Committee report states that Finance Secretary Tracy N. Norita has certified that that those funds are available for appropriation.

Rep. Roman C. Benavente (Ind-Saipan) introduced the local bill last Aug. 18 and it was subsequently referred to the Ways and Means Committee.

Under the bill, the Department of Public Works secretary shall be the expenditure authority for the $503,900.

EARTHQUAKE BRIEFS

4.5-magnitude earthquake in the Marianas yesterday

At 8:24am on Oct. 17, 2023, a report of a 4.5-magnitude earthquake occurred in the Marianas Islands region. Currently, there are no reports of injuries or damages and no Tsunami warnings or advisories were issued by the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center.

For more information, contact the CNMI EOC State Warning Point at (670) 237-8000. ***(PR)***

4.9-magnitude quake on Saipan last Oct. 10

At 10:27pm on Oct. 10, 2023, a report of a 4.9-magnitude earthquake occurred on Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands. Currently, there are no reports of injuries or damages and no Tsunami warnings or advisories were issued by the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center.

For more information, contact the CNMI EOC State Warning Point at (670) 237-8000. ***(PR)***

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
CNMI GOVERNMENT

INVITATION TO BID
ITB NO.: DPW23-ITB No.: 42400001

SUBMISSION DATE: November 8, 2023 TIME: 10:00 A.M.

"Dismantling of Imperial Pacific International (IPI) Tower Crane No. 5 and 6."

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE TECHNICAL SERVICES DIVISION, DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS, LOCATED ON SECOND FLOOR, OLEAI JOETEN COMMERCIAL CENTER, SAN JOSE, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

The project package will be available on or after **October 18, 2023** at Technical Services Division, Department of Public Works, located on Second Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, San Jose, Saipan.

There will be a **Mandatory Pre-bid Conference** for this project on **October 27, 2023**, 9:00 a.m. local time at the Department of Public Works Conference Room 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center Office, Saipan. The Prospective bidders are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the site. All question regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than 4:30 p.m. local time on **November 1, 2023** to **Mr. Anthony A. Camacho, Director of Technical Services Division**, 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, Saipan or fax to (670) 234-3547. Response to questions shall be shared with prospective bidders.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ RAY N. YUMUL
SECRETARY, DPW

/S/ BRIEN SERS NICHOLAS JR.
Acting Director, Division of Procurement Services

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
STATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD
P.O. Box 10007 I Saipan, MP 96950 I Phone: (670) 664-1712
Email: cnmiswdb@dol.gov.mp

VISION: *"To integrate a seamless workforce development system that meets the needs of employers, job-seekers, workers, and youths in order to supply quality employees for the dynamic economy of the CNMI."*
MISSION: *"Empowering, integrating, implementing, and innovating the workforce needs of the CNMI."*

In accordance with Public Law 8-41, Section 11(a), the CNMI State Workforce Development Board hereby gives notice that it will hold its Program Year (PY) 2023 1st Quarter General Membership Meeting on Friday, October 20, 2023 from 11:00AM – 1:00PM at the Hyatt Regency Chamolinian Room.

AGENDA

I. Call to Order
II. Roll Call
III. Review & Adoption of Agenda of October 20, 2023
IV. Review & Adoption of Meeting Minutes of September 22, 2023
V. Public Comments
VI. New Business
  a. PY2023 Resource Plan
  b. FY2023 Citizen Centric Report
VII. Old Business
  a. Eligible Training Provider Applications
    i. 500 Sails
    ii. Western Pacific Maritime Academy, Inc.
    iii. Guam Marianas Training Center
    iv. Northern Marianas Technical Institute
  b. Proposed and Amended Policies
    i. DWG Quest Policy
    ii. Stipends & Incentives Policies
    iii. Transfer of Funds Policy
VIII. Announcements
IX. Next Meeting
X. Adjournment

/s/ Velma Ann Palacios
Chairperson

ACCOMMODATIONS
Individuals who require accommodations are requested to contact the Department of Labor Workforce Investment Agency at 670.484.6743 at least 72 hours prior to the meeting in order to ensure the availability of the requested accommodation.

PUBLIC COMMENTS
The public is welcome to comment on any agenda item. Public comments may be made by:
- Email to cnmiswdb@dol.gov.mp an hour before the meeting start time. The subject line shall identify the date of the meeting followed by the agenda item being addressed.
- Oral testimonies in-person at the meeting.

Timely submission of public comments will be read aloud during the public comment segment of the agenda and made available to the public in compliance with Public Law 8-41.

This publication is supported by the Employment and Training Administration of the U.S. Department of Labor as part of Program Year 2021 award totaling $1,537,732 with 0 percent financed from non-governmental sources.

Located at the Armatech Building in Chalan Kanoa across the intersection leading to the U.S. Post Office. For reservations or for more information, call 234-8894, 287-8895 and 488-8899.

$25K bail for man accused of stealing food stamps

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Superior Court has imposed a $25,000 cash bail on a man accused of stealing thousands worth of food stamps from a local grocery store.

Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph Camacho imposed Monday a $25,000 cash bail on Michael Jesse Aguon Manalo, who allegedly broke into New CK Market and stole thousands worth in food stamp coupons and other items.

Manalo, 30, is charged with burglary and theft. He also has two active bench warrants for failing to appear for his arraignment in two separate burglary and theft cases.

After his bail hearing, Manalo was remanded back to Department of Corrections' custody and was ordered to return to court on Oct. 23 for a preliminary hearing; his arraignment was set for Oct. 30.

According to the complaint against Manalo, the New CK Market store manager told investigators that when he entered the establishment on the morning of Oct. 4, he noticed that something was wrong.

He said he saw two plastic bags filled with store items placed near the entrance. He then went around the store's exterior and saw that the back door was open.

About $3,000 in food stamp coupons, $5,000 cash, $1,000 worth of assorted cigarettes, an iPhone 6 valued at $1,000, and other equipment valued at $1,200 were allegedly stolen from the establishment.

Manalo was arrested after detectives reviewed surveillance footage from the store and identified him based on previous encounters with him.

Manalo allegedly admitted during questioning to breaking into the store. Manalo reportedly identified himself in the surveillance footage as the person inside the store, and the person who tossed a white plastic bag over a fence with a blue bag containing food stamp coupons.

KIMBERLY B. ESMORES

Michael Jesse Aguon Manalo, a man who was arrested for allegedly breaking into New CK Market and stealing thousands worth in food stamp coupons, makes his way to Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph Camacho's courtroom last Monday

AYUYU

From page 1

hearing Friday before the Senate Committee on Executive Appointments and Government Investigations, Ayuyu said the cost of living on Rota and Tinian has always been a "very interesting" subject for many years. Ayuyu said he has had some conversations with his colleagues about supply and demand and how that drives the price.

"We have a company, let's say for example, [on] Rota, Tinian, and Saipan that monopolized the ports over the years and the interesting thing about it is when I mentioned politics, sometimes the agreement or the franchise is not even up; they already renewed it," he said, so there's just no chance for the community to seek out competitive people to run the ports.

One of Ayuyu's goals on the CPA board is to review these arrangements for an opportunity to get these companies to be efficient in what they do and pass those savings to the consumers.

He said he has been in business for a long time and there are two choices to make when increasing prices.

"You can price yourself in such a way that you make more than enough money that you need versus 'Hey, you know what, if I increase my price, I need to be reasonable to the community,'" he said.

Ayuyu is also interested in looking at the reinvestment plans of these companies. He noted that this has never been looked at very closely.

"We assume that these people are behaving and doing things on behalf of the community. But we don't know. And I've never heard of anybody reviewing these arrangements," he said.

Ayuyu agreed with newly appointed CPA board member Steve King Mesngon during the confirmation hearing that they need to provide a competitive atmosphere.

Ayuyu recalled that when he first opened McDonald's on Saipan and when Wendy's came in, people would ask him if he's worried about it. He said "no" as he believes competition is very good as it keeps him on his toes.

Ayuyu feels that, with exclusive concessions at CNMI airports and seaports, the concessionaires control everything that comes into the islands.

He said it's very important for the community to know that the price the concessionaires are charging for all the commodities that are coming in is reasonable when compared to other jurisdictions.

"And if it is an overcharging issue, maybe there's something that we need to sit down with them and say 'Hey, you know what, this is what we see in Hawaii. You're way beyond,'" he said.

Ayuyu said the CPA board of directors hold the permitting authority and they can tell that to concessionaires.

He said since these are franchises or exclusive agreements, the government should be able to have access to their financials. Ayuyu said he does not know if that's happening, whether every year they have an audited financial statement given to CPA.

"The CPA financial controller should take a look at that and say, 'You know what, your profit margin is 20%. The average industry in the U.S. is 10%. Hey, there's something really wrong here. You are pocketing more money than you should. Let's work out something. That difference in 10% can go into potential savings to the community,'" he said.

Ayuyu said these companies may be doing the right thing, but he does not know as nobody has looked at the details.

As for any reinvestments, he said he does that with his own business every seven years by making sure he saves enough money so he can reinvest in the company.

In the case of port concessionaires, Ayuyu said the exclusive agreement with the government should mean they have to have a plan. For example, he said, if a crane lasts 10 years, the company should not wait until it breaks down.

"Because if it breaks down, who suffers? Not the company, it's the community," said Ayuyu, adding that a lot of these costs are unnecessarily passed on to consumers because these operators don't know what they are doing and are not planning.

A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com

JAPAN

From page 1

Society of the Northern Mariana Islands' meeting at the Office of the Mayor of Saipan in Susupe.

Although the commemorative ceremony had continued in 2022, up until now it had been virtual due to lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and travelling restrictions in Japan.

This year, the ceremony would not only be the first in-person event, but Mayor Tomonori Ito of Saipan's sister city in Japan, Katori City, along with a 30-plus group from Japan, would join the priests for the ceremony.

Both Seiji Sato, who chairs the Japanese Society of the Northern Mariana Islands, and vice chair Hiroko Tenorio said they feel honored to have Ito visit for the ceremony, and for the 2023 Japanese Autumn Festival that will follow.

Tenorio explained that the Katori Shrine commemoration is not only meant to rekindle the traditional event, but also to help boost tourism to the CNMI, while sharing the Japanese culture and traditions with CNMI residents.

"The main reason they are [coming] here from Katori City is to have the exchange program that we have been doing since last October, when we agreed to be a sister city. The mayor [of Saipan] visited this past July to have an initial meeting for what kinds of programs we can do, so this time, they [Ito and his delegation] will come here to attend the ceremony and participate in the festival and, at the same time, we're going to have a meeting here to continue discussions on what else we can do," she said

The Shinto ceremony is set to begin at 10am on Saturday, Oct. 28, 2023, at the Saipan Katori Shrine in Sugar King Park.

NUMBER

From page 1

From October 2021 to September 2022 (fiscal year 2022), there were a total of 8,367 licenses issued; from October 2022 to September 2023, there were 8,613—an increase of approximately 246, said Norita in response to Saipan Tribune's inquiry.

"This is a positive indicator of economic recovery post-COVID," she said.

Norita said it is also an indicator of stronger enforcement by the Division of Revenue and Taxation to ensure compliance with licensing laws and regulations.

She added that it shows the willingness of the business community to continue servicing the Commonwealth.

Business license statistics indicate that, of the 8,367 total licenses issued in fiscal year 2022, a total of 4,522 applications were received: 665 were new, 3,484 were renewals, and 373 were amendments.

Of 8,613 total licenses issued in fiscal year 2023, a total of 4,667 applications were received: 741 were new, 3,529 were renewals, and 387 were amendments.

In its breakdown of licenses by industry in both fiscal years 2022 and 2023, Finance disclosed that real estate and rental and leasing was on top, followed by retail trade.

In September 2022, there were 339 licenses issued; in September 2023 there were 568—an increase of 229.

In January 2022, there were 1,281 licenses issued, but in January 2023 there were 1,095—a decrease of 186.

In November 2021, 627 business licenses were issued, but in the same period in 2022 there were 807 issued—an increase of 180.

MARRIOTT

From page 1

its partnership with Marriott International through a hotel management agreement signing ceremony at the Hyatt Regency Saipan Ballroom. A hotel management agreement means Honest Profit still owns the property, but it will be run and managed by Marriott International.

During the ceremony, Honest Profit and Marriott International representatives announced that the opening of the Marriott Resort Saipan is anticipated to happen in 2025.

Saipan Tribune learned that the Marriott Resort Saipan will be opening at what initially was Honest Profit's Saipan Resort Hotel, a 300-room hotel in San Antonio that was worth about $130 million when it broke ground back in 2014.

Gov. Arnold I. Palacios, Lt. Gov. David M. Apatang, members of the CNMI government, private sectors, and tourism stakeholders were in attendance during the announcement ceremony yesterday.

In a statement from Marianas Visitors Authority managing director Chris Concepcion, he said that MVA is excited by Marriott's expansion to the CNMI through its partnership with Honest Profit.

"The Marianas Visitors Authority is very excited with the announcement by Marriott International of their expansion into the CNMI in partnership with Honest Profit International Ltd. The Marriott group is the largest branded hotel chain in the world with properties in over 130 countries. They are a leader in the global hospitality industry, so having their brand power in the CNMI bodes well for the future of the tourism industry and speaks volumes about their confidence in our destination," he said.

Concepcion added that having a Marriott hotel in the CNMI gives both visitors and investors confidence in the Commonwealth.

"Having a recognized brand like the Marriott gives confidence to our visitors and investors, provides extensive marketing opportunities, introduces a new consumer base through their BonVoy loyalty program, and provides an extensive network of travel industry partners that the CNMI can leverage in promoting our islands. It complements our hotel industry portfolio already in the Commonwealth. We extend our congratulations and sincere welcome to the Marriott group," he said.

The announcement of the launch of the Marriot Resort Saipan could not have come at a better time as the CNMI's tourism industry has started to pick back up. Currently, the CNMI has seen tourists return slowly but surely following the COVID-19 pandemic.

MVA has been diligently selling the CNMI as a destination in both South Korea and Japan.

The Commonwealth Ports Authority and private sector partners have also been fighting for a CNMI exemption from the U.S. Department of Transportation's China Part Order 213, which essentially caps the number of flights from China to the entire United States to 24 each month. This will take effect on Oct. 28.

CNMI SBDC, CWA join forces for economic growth, women empowerment

As part of the ongoing efforts to empower women entrepreneurs in the Commonwealth, the CNMI Small Business Development Center Network at the Northern Marianas College and the Commonwealth Women's Association will be hosting the third cohort of the Women's Entrepreneurship Project. This project aims to provide a nurturing environment for female entrepreneurs to thrive and succeed in their business endeavors.

The Women Entrepreneurship Project is a flagship initiative focused on promoting women's entrepreneurship, economic growth, and fostering self-sufficiency. With a vision to empower women in the business world, Cohort three will mark another significant milestone in creating a network of successful female entrepreneurs.

"A diverse workforce is an innovative workforce, and in a world where the number of female CEOs and in other positions of leadership are steadily growing, it is now more important than ever that we cultivate our women to rise with confidence and excel through empowerment," CNMI SBDC Network director Nadine Deleon Guerrero said. "The Women's Entrepreneurship Project caters to our women leaders in the workforce who seek a safe space to express challenges and learn through development. If you are a woman in business or looking towards starting one, join us for this four-day program where we aim to sharpen your skills through learning about the intricate workings of social media, writing a business plan and becoming more proficient in understanding financial statements."

The CNMI SBDC Network at NMC has been a steadfast supporter of fostering business growth within the region. The collaboration with CWA brings a depth of expertise and dedication to empowering women entrepreneurs, providing mentorship, resources, and a platform for women to connect and learn from each other.

Map to the training room.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

"This program furthers CWA's mission to empower CNMI's women entrepreneurs, ignite dreams, foster success, and build a thriving community," CWA vice president Jessy Loomis said.

The CWA, known for its dedication to advancing the rights and opportunities for women, is eager to contribute its expertise and resources to help women entrepreneurs thrive. The collaboration underscores the importance of fostering gender diversity and inclusivity in the business world.

Cohort 3 of the Women Entrepreneurship Project will offer a tailored program that includes the following trainings:

■ **MONDAY, OCT. 23, 2023**

SBDC 101: An Intro to SBDC Services (and an overview of training sessions)

Overview: Welcome to SBDC 101, your gateway to understanding the invaluable services provided by SBDCs. Whether you're an aspiring entrepreneur or an established business owner looking to grow, SBDCs offer a wealth of resources to support your journey. In this introduction, we'll explore the core services provided by SBDCs and how they can be instrumental in your business success.

Guest speaker: Roman Tudela, MBA (CNMI SBDCN marketing manager/outreach specialist)

■ **TUESDAY, OCT. 24, 2023**

Brick & Mortar to Click & Order: Social Media Edition

Overview: In the digital age, the transition from a traditional brick-and-mortar business to an online presence is crucial for sustained growth. This module, "Brick & Mortar to Click & Order," focuses on harnessing the power of social media to propel your business into the online realm. Let's explore how strategic social media usage can elevate your brand, reach new audiences, and drive online sales.

Guest speaker: Roman Tudela, MBA (CNMI SBDCN marketing manager/outreach specialist)

■ **WEDNESDAY, OCT. 25, 2023**

Mind your Business Plan: Basics of Writing a Business Plan

Overview: Welcome to "Mind Your Business Plan," a comprehensive guide designed to demystify the process of crafting an effective business plan. Whether you're launching a new venture or looking to refine your existing business strategy, a well-crafted business plan is your roadmap to success. In this training session, we'll walk through the essential elements of a business plan and provide practical insights to help you articulate your vision and attract stakeholders.

Guest speaker: Mercilynn Kaneshi Palec, MPA (CNMI Small Business Development Center Network associate network director)

■ **THURSDAY, OCT. 26, 2023**

Show Me the Money: Financial Literacy

Overview: Welcome to "Show Me the Money," an interactive presentation aimed at demystifying the world of finance and promoting financial literacy. In this session, we'll explore essential financial concepts, empowering you to make informed decisions about your money, whether for personal finance or business. Let's dive into the fundamentals that will help you navigate the financial landscape with confidence.

Guest speakers: Nadine C. Deleon Guerrero, MPA (CNMI Small Business Development Center Network director) with representatives from the Commonwealth Economic Development Authority and Small Business Administration-backed lender, First Hawaiian Bank

The Women Entrepreneurship Project invites aspiring and established women entrepreneurs to join Cohort 3 and seize the opportunity to take their businesses to new heights. To register for one or all of the trainings, refer to the following links:

■ Monday, Oct. 23, 2023: SBDC 101: An Introduction to to SBDC Services https://marianas.ecenterdirect.com/events/1019130

■ Tuesday, Oct. 24, 2023: Brick & Mortar to Click & Order: Social Media Edition https://marianas.ecenterdirect.com/events/1019131

■ Wednesday, Oct. 25, 2023: Mind Your Business Plan: Basics of Writing a Business Plan https://marianas.ecenterdirect.com/events/1019132

■ Thursday, Oct. 26, 2023: Show Me the Money: Financial Literacy https://marianas.ecenterdirect.com/events/1019133

Attendees must be a registered SBDC client. At the end of the cohort session, certificates of completion will be issued; however, the attendee must be present at all four sessions to receive a certificate. If for whatever reason the attendee misses a day of the program, they may still attend the other sessions—but will not be issued a certificate of completion. Call (670) 237-6888 for more information.

The CNMI SBDC Network promotes a business-friendly economic infrastructure in the community, builds entrepreneurial capacity and financial literacy within that community, and provides current and nascent small businesses with the technical assistance, counseling, training, and support they need to innovate, adapt, and grow.

The CNMI SBDC Network is composed of the CNMI SBDC lead center on Saipan, the Rota SBDC, and Tinian SBDC.

CNMI SBDC Network is partially funded by a cooperative agreement with SBA and NMC.

Requests for reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities will be made if requested at least two weeks in advance. Language assistance services are available for limited English proficient individuals with at least two weeks advance notice. For arrangements, contact you're the CNMI SBDC at P.O. Box 501250 Saipan, MP 96950, Tel: (670) 237-6888, or email adelpha.magofna@marianas.edu. ***(PR)***

Ocean conservation presentation tonight

Members of the public are invited to a presentation on a project exploring community-led ocean conservation in the Marianas, tonight, Wednesday, Oct. 18, 2023 starting at 6pm at the American Memorial Park Visitor Center on Saipan. Participants may also join virtually at meet.google.com/nvu-cwep-hrs or by phone at 1-860-629-8473 (PIN:706 586 579#).

Sablan

Project lead Tina Sablan will share the highlights of research that includes surveys and interviews in the Northern Marianas and Guam, exploring key challenges, lessons learned, opportunities, and possible paths forward for ocean conservation on the islands. Discussion and Q&A will follow. Admission is free, and all are welcome.

Contact Sablan for more information at (670) 285 3935 or tinasablan@gmail.com. This project is funded by the National Ocean Protection Coalition. ***(PR)***

KARIDAT
Faith, Hope and
Catholic Charities - Diocese of Chalan Kanoa

A Northern Mariana Islands Social Service
JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

(1) ACCOUNTANT

For more information, job description and an application visit the Karidat main office in Dandan Village, Dandan Road, or interested applicants can email: info@karidat.org to receive a position description and fillable application form.

DOCUMENTS REQUIRED: A completed application form, copy of diploma/degree, resume/bio-data; current police clearance within 6 months and a copy of valid CNMI driver's license.

NO PHONE INQUIRIES PLEASE.
CLOSING DATE: FRIDAY, October 20, 2023 AT 4:00 PM

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION
P.O. BOX 500514, Saipan, MP 96950-0514
Email: nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp • Website: http://www.nmhcgov.net

PUBLIC NOTICE

10/02/2023

Notice for Public Comment
Reprogramming of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Funds

Program Year/ IDIS No.:	Program:	Activity Name:	Subrecipient:	Approved Budget:	Proposed Reprogramming: Amount	Proposed Revised Project: Budget	Current IDIS Funded Amount:
IDIS# 759	CDBG	PY2021 CDBG Planning and Administrative Costs		$194,083.20	($155,999.51)	$38,083.69	$194,083.20
	CDBG	PY2020 Unobligated Funds available to commit			($1,491.27)		
	CDBG	PY2021 Unobligated Funds available to commit			($507.11)		
	CDBG	PY2022 Unobligated Funds available to commit			($5,824.51)		
		Total Reprogrammed from Activities:			**($163,822.40)**		
IDIS# 753	CDBG	Tinian Children's Park Improvement Project	Office of the Mayor of Tinian and Aguiguan	$288,977.60	$163,822.40	$452,800.00	$288,977.60
		Total Reprogrammed to Activities:			**$163,822.40**		

Our agency through its Citizen Participation Plan (CPP) publishes a "Public Notice" on reprogramming funds from Planning and Administrative Cost to a project activity, which constitutes as a substantial amendment. Therefore, any comments from the general public should be submitted to NMHC Central Office located in Garapan, Saipan, and to the Rota and Tinian Field Offices, on or before November 3, 2023 no later than 4:30 P.M. You may contact Ms. Zenie P. Mafnas, Deputy Corporate Director or Ms. Tricia Tenorio, Planner @ (670)234-6866/9447.

"NMHC is an equal employment and fair housing public agency"

Manta Ray, Dolphin, Ayuyu cadets assist in cemetery cleanup

By C/2LT KIANI PANGELINAN
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Last Saturday Saipan Southern High School Manta Ray Battalion, along with battalions from Kagman High School and Marianas High School, were up bright and early from 8am to 11am to take the initiative to assist the community by thoroughly cleaning up the Chalan Kanoa Cemetery in preparation for All Saints and All Souls Day, which will take place next month.

Despite experiencing Typhoon Bolaven recently, the three ROTC battalions were still able to have over 150 cadets come out to assist the community, showcasing the great motivation and dedication the cadets have. All three schools were split into three groups as they worked together to clean their designated areas.

C/SSG Jeremiah Roberto said that, "It was a very enjoyable experience since I was able to see my friends and work with them to clean up the cemetery."

C/SSG Niana Mad also was able to share her experience saying, "Definitely more fun than I had expected! I got the chance to build a stronger bond withtwo2 of the other cadets in my company. I enjoyed that we as the younger generation had the opportunity to clean our community's cemetery. All in all, it was great and a refresher after the whole week without school."

C/SFC Jamie Deblois said, "The cemetery cleanup was such a great experience and opportunity to connect with others while being able to clean up and beautify our community as well as having the chance to meet new people and give respect to the people that have died so it was overall a great way to spend a Saturday."

Toward the end of the cleanup cadets managed to fill up over 70 bags of numerous weathered wreaths, damaged candles, old flowers, trash, and other debris covering several graves.

All three battalions received a certificate of appreciation for their tremendous work on thoroughly cleaning up the Chalan Kanoa Cemetery.

Organizers thanked all of the cadets for coming out and supporting the community.

USCG Guam sends delegation to Marshall Islands

USCG

Capt. Nicholas Simmons, commander of U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia/Sector Guam, and members of the CGFM/SG Compact of Free Association team stand for a photo with members of the RMI Trust Company on Sept. 20, 2023. The Trust Company is responsible for maintaining the flag registry of commercial vessels, one of the leading registries in the world. Simmons led a delegation to the Republic of the Marshall Islands, one of the three former U.S. trust territories under the Compact of Free Association. The visit underscores CGFM/SG's strengthened role as the primary facilitator of the cooperative relationship between the U.S. Coast Guard and the RMI, reinforcing longstanding ties.

USCG

Capt. Nicholas Simmons, commander of U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia/Sector Guam, and members of the CGFM/SG Compact of Free Association team stand for a photo RMI Environmental Protection Authority on Sept. 21, 2023. Simmons led a delegation to the Republic of the Marshall Islands, one of the three former U.S. trust territories under the Compact of Free Association. The visit underscores CGFM/SG's strengthened role as the primary facilitator of the cooperative relationship between the U.S. Coast Guard and the RMI, reinforcing longstanding ties.

SANTA RITA, Guam— Capt. Nicholas Simmons, commander of U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia/Sector Guam, led a delegation to the Republic of the Marshall Islands, one of the three former U.S. trust territories under the Compact of Free Association the week of Sept. 18, 2023.

» Assumes expanded role as primary facilitator of longstanding relationship

USCG

Capt. Nicholas Simmons, commander of U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia/Sector Guam, stands for a photo with Col. Drew Morgan, commander of U.S. Army Garrison Kwajalein, on Sept. 25, 2023.

The visit underscores CGFM/SG's strengthened role as the primary facilitator of the cooperative relationship between the U.S. Coast Guard and the RMI, reinforcing longstanding ties. They will continue to hold a significant role in the regular Joint Committee Meetings.

Deepening partnerships in the Pacific

"Nurturing our relationship with key leaders in the Pacific region is vital. While we cover an immense area, spanning more than 2 million square nautical miles, our focus remains on fostering meaningful ties with our island neighbors and assisting them in their professional maritime endeavors," said Simmons.

The delegation, including COFA Maritime Advisor Lt. Cmdr. Christine Igisomar and COFA Liaison Officer Lt. Anna Maria Vaccaro, met with pivotal Marshallese agencies, such as the RMI Environmental Protection Authority and the RMI Trust Company. They also engaged with the U.S. embassy charge d'affairs and staff and the Australian maritime security advisor's team.

Commitment to the region

The recent visit builds upon the December 2022 engagement when the Guam-based 154-foot Sentinel-class fast response cutter USCGC Frederick Hatch (WPC 1143) crew visited Majuro, the capital of the RMI. The mission reinforced the partnership through established bilateral maritime law enforcement agreements, shiprider operations, subject matter exchanges, and community engagements.

Compact of Free Association explained

The Compact of Free Association serves as a framework for the U.S. relationship with its former trust territories, which include the Pacific Island Countries of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Republic of Palau, and the Federated States of Micronesia. The agreement offers economic aid, defense provisions, and other forms of cooperation. As a facilitator, the U.S. Coast Guard aims to reinforce enthusiasm for U.S. re-engagement in the region, prioritizing cooperative efforts to safeguard lives, individual sovereignty, and regional resources such as highly migratory fish stocks.

USCG

Capt. Nicholas Simmons, commander of U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia/Sector Guam, receives a technical explanation from the radar operator inside the Sea Dragon aircraft on Sept. 20, 2023.

A shared maritime heritage

The Republic of the Marshall Islands and the U.S. Coast Guard share a rich maritime heritage. "Though our traditional navigational tools may differ, at the heart of our relationship is a shared respect for the sea," said Simmons. "This enhanced role underscores CGFM/SG's commitment to our island neighbors, solidifying the U.S. Coast Guard as a trusted partner with an enduring positive presence and our desire for sustained cooperative endeavors in Oceania."

U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia/Sector Guam comprises more than 350 members based in Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands spread across shoreside and afloat units committed to maritime safety, security, and stewardship in Oceania. They operate under the U.S. Coast Guard 14th District umbrella, which oversees operations for the Central and Western Pacific. ***(USCG)***

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
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EDITORIAL

Senate delegation reassures Israel; where's the House?

As House Republicans fiddle while the world burns, some grown-ups in the Senate have thankfully moved to fill the leadership void.

Over the weekend, Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., led a bipartisan group of senators to Israel to show support for the nation in the wake of the brutal Hamas terror attack. The delegation also included Democrats Jacky Rosen of Nevada and Mark Kelly of Arizona, with Republicans Mitt Romney of Utah and Bill Cassidy of Louisiana.

The move sends a clear message that the United States stands with its staunch ally in the Middle East.

"This has deep resonance to people," Schumer said. "Because we have not seen anything as vicious and nasty as this since the Nazis." He added that the visit will also boost Israeli morale.

The agenda included discussions of how the United States can provide aid to Israel "on all fronts," a spokesperson for the majority leader noted.

That assistance must also include a commitment to assuring Israel that the United States won't exert covert pressure on the nation to de-escalate its response or scale back what appears to be a certain invasion of Gaza. That would be a huge mistake and only reward Hamas' actions. Israel has every right to defend itself from those who have made clear they want no peace and will continue to wage war to eradicate the Jewish state.

The Hamas attack was calculated to include the death of civilian men, women and children. By contrast, Israel has made efforts to avoid such indiscriminate destruction. The country has dropped leaflets warning 1.1 million Gazans to evacuate and distance themselves "from Hamas terrorists who are using you as human shields."

Schumer said he will advise the Biden administration upon his return on a legislative package involving aid for both Israel and Ukraine. Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell has also said that he wants any financial assistance for the two nations tied together, ABC News reported.

Which makes it even more urgent that holdout House Republicans end their circular firing squad and compromise on a candidate for speaker. Until that happens, any such assistance will remain stalled in the lower chamber, a victim of petty grievances and foolish intransigence. The gravity of the situation in the Middle East requires courageous statesmanship, not self-interested buffoonery.

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It's even worse than you thought

By MARTIN SCHRAM
Tribune News Service

Martin Schram, an op-ed columnist for Tribune News Service, is a veteran Washington journalist, author and TV documentary executive. Readers may send him email at martin.schram@gmail.com.

Life in Qatar is serene and frequently lavish, and it is easy to adjust to the Persian Gulf lifestyle of Doha's magnificent glass and steel skyscrapers, fine restaurants and posh comforts.

And on Friday it was also a symbol of just how mondo-bizarro the world of the Middle East has become. Two men of state, wearing the fashions of their respective trades—one in a dark blue business suit, the other in the white flowing robe and headdress—stood side by side at lecterns in the posh, modern comfort of a grand room of Qatar's capital. They talked to reporters in subdued tones about the horrific hell and inhumane human conduct that was being allowed to happen a thousand miles away, in a people-packed soda straw of a place called Gaza and its larger neighbor, Israel.

America's Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Qatar's Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani had been talking privately of their multiple efforts to end the Israeli-Palestinian crisis in Gaza before it explodes into a calumny of historic proportions.

But left unspoken, at least at the microphones, was the mind-boggling connection that links Qatar, where they were so comfortably speaking, and the inhumane hell that had happened in Israel last Saturday morning and was happening now in Gaza. We'll get to that. But first you need to hear what Blinken had to say to the world as Qatar's prime minister stood at his side. It was one of the most compelling—forceful even as it was quietly voiced—diplomatic scenes I've witnessed (via big screen) in decades of covering these things in person.

The lynchpin is the most unprincipled terrorist group called Hamas. It was elected almost two decades ago to run Gaza. A week ago Saturday, Hamas invaded Israel, slaughtered 1,300, beheading, raping and committed the vilest atrocities. They took more than 100 to Gaza to be their human shields. Why? They schemed to con Israel into military retaliation that would kill masses of civilians—yes, especially thousands of their own Palestinian civilians. They considered not only Jews but even their own people expendable—if it served their larger cause: They want to make the world hate Israelis.

And when Israel dropped leaflets and issued cell phone and other warnings pleading with Gaza's masses to flee northern Gaza and head south to avoid the invasion and bombs that were coming—the people running Hamas told their own people to ignore the warnings and stay in place.

On Friday, with Qatar's prime minister at his side, America's secretary of state made sure the world understood the core human values that Republican and Democratic presidencies have sought to champion:

"Let's not lose sight of why this is happening. Israelis are conducting operations in Gaza because Hamas carried out attacks that killed—in the most horrific way—1,300 of (their) people. Hamas terrorists slaughtered, raped, mutilated, tortured, burned innocent civilians. The babies and the elderly. Men. Women. Boys and girls. …Hamas continues to use innocent civilians as human shields. And (Hamas) is reportedly blocking roads preventing Palestinians from moving to southern Gaza out of harm's way."

So how does all this truth-telling about the evils of Hamas leaders link back to Qatar?

Because Hamas' top political leader, Ismail Haniyeh, doesn't live in Gaza at all. He lives not far from where Blinken and Qatar's prime minister were speaking, in the quiet, posh and most definitely safe comforts of Doha, Qatar. His super-safe home is just over a thousand miles away from where Hamas was encouraging Palestinians to stay put, at home, even as they were doing all they could to inflame Israelis into angrily bombing and invading Gaza—knowing thousands of their own people would die.

Hamas' leaders—and mainly their chief funders and string-pullers in Iran—had become stunned and desperate when recent events took the not-at-all unlikely turn. Saudi Arabia (which had a long but never stated relationship with Israeli's governments) decided that now was the time to make their diplo-secret official. Last weekend's Hamas invasion was intended to goad Israel into killing enough Arab civilians to make it impossible for the Saudis and allies to be working with Israel.

Hamas' leaders and their benefactors in Iran had great but unwitting help from Israel's most clueless prime minister. Benjamin Netanyahu, worried about facing corruption charges, worked this year to emasculate Israel's Supreme Court. He willfully tore apart his nation in the process. Hundreds of thousands openly protested—including a massive portion of his military. He made his nation look weak for all the world to see. And Hamas' leaders saw this as their now-or-never moment.

So Hamas created the crisis that sickened us all this past week. Cynical and shameful.

EDITORIAL POLICY

Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Israel has tough questions to ask about a ground invasion of Gaza

By DANIEL DEPETRIS
Chicago Tribune

Daniel DePetris is a fellow at Defense Priorities and a foreign affairs columnist for the Chicago Tribune.

More than a week after the deadliest attack inside Israel in 50 years, the Israel Defense Forces are preparing for their largest and most difficult military operation since the 1982 war in Lebanon.

Approximately 360,000 reservists have been called up, with most of the personnel being stationed near Israel's border with the Gaza Strip. A restricted military zone has been declared in the area. On Friday, the Israeli military warned the more than 1 million Palestinian civilians living in the northern third of Gaza to evacuate farther south. Some Israeli raids have occurred in Gaza already. Meanwhile, Israeli warplanes are pummeling hundreds of targets every night.

Senior Israeli officials are in no mood for talking. "We will topple Hamas rule in Gaza," Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant said. "We will eliminate its military capability. We will make sure this threat doesn't exist on our border." The probability of a large-scale ground campaign against Hamas is becoming more likely as the days go by.

One can only sympathize with Israel's desire to exact a high price for Hamas' devastating attacks on Israeli civilians. The death toll in that day of carnage has risen to 1,300, with many children among them. The whole state of Israel is distraught. There is unbelievable pressure on Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to respond with the utmost severity given the depravity of the assaults on the innocent.

Yet as hard as it is to hear right now, emotion doesn't make good policy. While a ground invasion of Gaza may be inevitable at this point, it could also create a new set of problems Israel will have to deal with.

Before the attacks on Oct. 7, Netanyahu's strategy on Hamas was containment. Although Hamas was (and is) dedicated to Israel's destruction, the organization was also the de facto government in Gaza. Israel couldn't tolerate the group, but it didn't necessarily want to destroy it either because it served a basic function: maintaining some order in an enclave Israel didn't want anything to do with.

In a strange way, Hamas and Israel needed each other: Israel viewed Hamas as a better alternative to the more extreme armed Palestinian factions, and Hamas needed Israel to ensure a sufficient amount of electricity, work permits and money was available to make administering Gaza tenable.

Israeli and Hamas officials engaged in numerous indirect negotiations over everything from prisoner releases to border openings. According to Aaron David Miller, a Middle East adviser to numerous U.S. secretaries of state, Israel and Hamas were even exploring a more durable arrangement in May 2018 that traded a long-term cease-fire for Israeli economic concessions.

Obviously, the paradigm has shifted after the Oct. 7 terrorist attacks. Whereas Israel used to be content with penalizing Hamas for rocket fire by degrading its military capabilities, degrading is no longer good enough in the minds of the Israeli defense establishment. Hamas' destruction is now the goal. The question is whether this objective can be accomplished—and, even if it could, whether Israel is prepared for the "day after."

First, nobody should be under any illusions about how challenging an Israeli ground incursion into Gaza will be. There's a reason why previous Israeli prime ministers, including Netanyahu, did everything they could to avoid it.

Gaza is an extremely tough operating environment for any military, even one like Israel's, which has experience in urban warfare and technological tools others can only dream of. The last time Israel approved a ground incursion into Gaza, in 2014, the operations were limited to within several miles of the Israel-Gaza border fence. Israel still lost 66 troops, and that's not to mention the dozens upon dozens who were injured during the fighting.

Because the Israelis have maximalist objectives this time around, any ground operation would likely be far more extensive than what the IDF executed in 2014. The fact that more than 1 million people have been asked to leave Gaza's northern section suggests the Israeli military is preparing a huge incursion, one that would result in a significant number of lives lost.

Previous Israeli military assessments predicted that a full combing of Gaza would result in the deaths of hundreds of soldiers and as many as 10,000 Palestinian civilians. The numbers sound staggering. But given that Gaza is one of the most packed areas on the entire planet, collateral damage is assured.

Indeed, Palestinian fatalities were already at 1,900 as of Friday evening. Add weeks or months of ground maneuvers into the mix, and the figure will look a whole lot worse.

And let's assume Israel does succeed in eliminating Hamas. The question must be asked: What then?

More than 2 million Palestinians call Gaza home. While Hamas is a terrorist organization, it has also been the ruling authority in the area for the last 16 years, even if the group's record as a government is abysmal. The end of Hamas, therefore, means the end of the Hamas government and whatever social services it provided to the Palestinian population there.

Is the Israeli government prepared to step into the breach? If so, it could include a cost-intensive reoccupation, a total turnaround of Israeli policy toward Gaza over the last 18 years. (Israel withdrew from Gaza in 2005.) Bringing in the internationally backed Palestinian Authority is an option, but the PA hasn't been in Gaza since 2007 and is as irrelevant as it has ever been. An Arab-led peacekeeping force might suffice, but are Arab states willing to be seen by their populations as cleaning up after Israel's mess?

Israeli policymakers are focused on the now. It would also be wise if they deliberated about the endgame.

Israel's goal in Gaza is regime change. Where have we heard that before?

By DOYLE MCMANUS
Los Angeles Times

Doyle McManus is a columnist for the Los Angeles Times. *Readers may send him email at doyle.mcmanus@latimes.com.*

Ever since Hamas seized control of the Gaza Strip in 2007, Israel has waged an intermittent but limited military campaign to keep a lid on the violent Palestinian faction. Hamas fired missiles at Israeli cities, Israel bombed Gaza from the air or attacked on the ground, then negotiated a cease-fire.

The goal was never to remove Hamas; that appeared too costly. It was merely to keep it under control. Israeli military officers gave their recurring Gaza offensives a sad, cynical name: "mowing the grass."

Last week, mowing the grass came to an end.

Hamas' murderous rampage through Israeli towns and villages, which deliberately targeted civilians, led Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to adopt a far more ambitious goal: regime change.

"We will destroy Hamas," Netanyahu said Friday.

"We are crushing Hamas' ability to function as sovereign," Daniel Hagari, a spokesman for Israel's armed forces, told reporters. "We cannot continue to live with this rule."

To remove Hamas from its hold on Gaza, Israel appears to be preparing a massive ground invasion. It has imposed a blockade, launched punishing airstrikes and urged more than a million Palestinian civilians to evacuate the northern third of the Gaza Strip.

Such an offensive would be difficult and costly. Hamas presumably knew its terrorist onslaught would provoke massive retaliation.

The group has spent years building fortified tunnels, preparing booby traps and training for house-to-house fighting. Former Israeli officers have estimated that dismantling Hamas' military power could take between two and six months of fighting.

The campaign could cost the lives of thousands of combatants and thousands of civilians as well. Last week's Israeli airstrikes killed an estimated 1,900 even before a ground offensive began. The United Nations warned that a massive, chaotic evacuation would have "devastating humanitarian consequences."

But even if Israel succeeds in toppling Hamas, it will face a conundrum that Americans will recognize from the 2003 U.S.-led invasion of Iraq: Who will administer Gaza? Who will police the streets and ensure Hamas doesn't rise again in an impoverished territory of people who have lost family and homes? The answer isn't clear.

The problem with Gaza is that nobody seems to want it except Hamas.

Israel doesn't want to occupy the territory; that's why it left in 2005.

Egypt, which abuts the Gaza Strip to the south, doesn't want it either.

Even the Palestinian Authority, which administers the Israeli-occupied West Bank and is led by longtime opponents of Hamas, may not want to take over—at least not right away, aboard Israeli tanks.

The PA is "the most natural address," former Prime Minister Ehud Barak said last week in an appearance at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. "It doesn't make sense to give [Gaza] back to Hamas."

In a poll conducted in July for the Washington Institute on Near East Policy, 70% of Gaza residents said they would prefer to live under the PA than under Hamas.

But it's not clear that the PA is up to the job. On the West Bank, the Palestinian Authority is widely regarded as inefficient and corrupt. Its leader, 87-year-old Mahmoud Abbas, hasn't allowed elections for 17 years.

Critics of Netanyahu say the prime minister has deliberately weakened the PA by allowing Israeli settlements on the West Bank to expand, even as he quietly maintained a modus vivendi with Hamas in Gaza.

Barak and others have suggested that a post-Hamas order in Gaza might begin with an interim peacekeeping force provided by Egypt and other Arab countries.

"It would be a great blessing," Barak said.

But that will require Israel to ask those countries, plus the United States and Saudi Arabia, for help brokering such an arrangement.

Some or all of the Arab countries involved would likely demand that Israel halt settlement expansion on the West Bank or make other concessions to the Palestinians as the price of their participation in a difficult and unrewarding mission.

All of which brings the issue back to where it started: the Israeli-Palestinian standoff, which has been gradually deteriorating for 15 years.

Israel's strategy of mowing the lawn in Gaza didn't just fail because Hamas is committed to the destruction of the Jewish state. It also failed because Hamas had a seemingly endless supply of potential recruits among young Gazans who saw no viable future.

When Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken met with Netanyahu last week, he reaffirmed the United States' strong support for Israel's right to self-defense. But he also reminded the prime minister that President Biden still believes Israel can achieve long-term security only if it seeks a viable peace with the Palestinians.

"We must provide an alternative to the vision of violence and fear, nihilism and terror presented by Hamas," Blinken said.

Netanyahu didn't respond. Israel's focus, understandably, is on recovering from the trauma of the past week and preparing the military offensive to come. It's far too soon to talk about a return to peace talks.

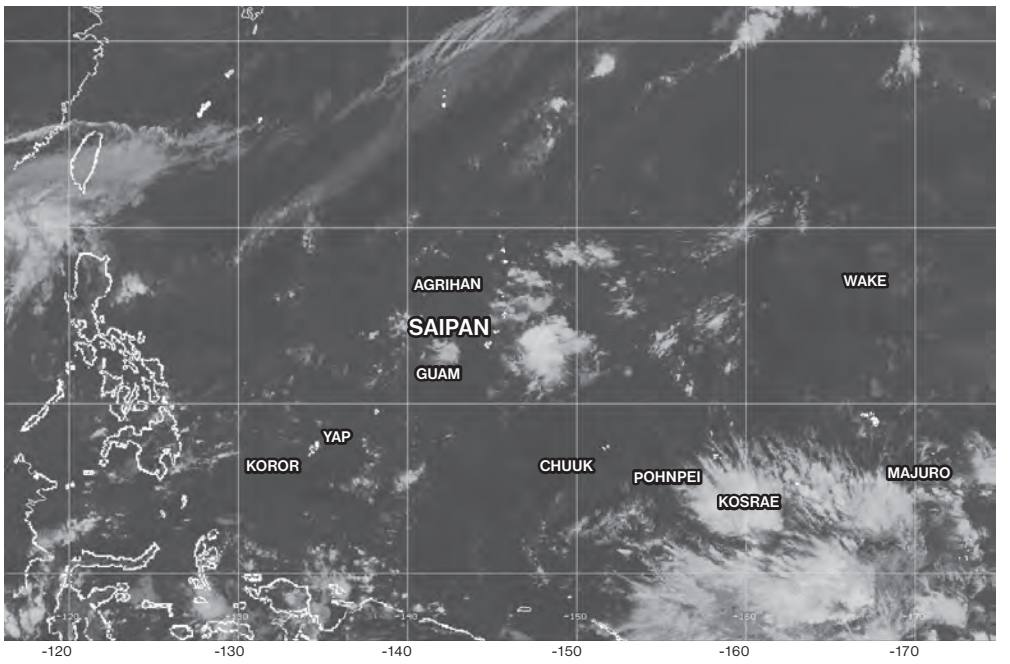
But it won't be forever, especially if the alternative is endlessly mowing the grass.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers and thunderstorms. East winds 10 to 15 mph.	Partly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms. East winds 10 to 15 mph.	Partly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of showers.	Partly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of showers.	Partly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of showers.
85 77º	87 79º	87 79º	87 79º	87 79º

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 8:29 AM, TUESDAY, OCTOBER 17, 2023

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Doppler radar and satellite imagery shows isolated showers for the Marianas. Showers are building into CNMI. Altimetry shows seas at 5 to 6 feet to the far east. Tanapag buoy shows around 8 feet and Ipan buoy shows near 4 feet.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: https://www.weather.gov/gum/

MICRONESIA	▲ ▼ °F	
Guam and Rota	Thunderstorms	84° / 77°
Palau	Thunderstorms	85° / 78°
Yap	Thunderstorms	87° / 80°
Chuuk	Partly Sunny	86° / 80°
Pohnpei	Partly Cloudy	78 / 86 °
Kosrae	Partly Sunny	80 / 86 °
Majuro	Thunderstorms	82 / 87 °

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:09 AM	5:55 PM
Thursday	6:09 AM	5:54 PM
Friday	6:09 AM	5:54 PM
Saturday	6:09 AM	5:53 PM
Sunday	6:10 AM	5:52 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	8:56 AM	8:22 PM	-
Thursday	9:55 AM	9:16 PM	-
Friday	10:55 AM	10:14 PM	-
Saturday	11:55 AM	11:16 PM	-
Sunday	12:52 PM	-	-

AROUND THE GLOBE	▲ ▼ °F	
Auckland	Showers	61° / 54°
Beijing	Showers	61° / 41°
Hong Kong	Mostly Sunny	84° / 75°
Honolulu	Mostly Sunny	87° / 75°
London	Cloudy	61° / 52°
Los Angeles	Sunny	92° / 64°
Manila	Thunderstorms	91° / 79°
Melbourne	Sunny	88° / 70°
Miami	Partly Cloudy	86° / 80°
New York	Sunny	64° / 48°
Osaka	Rain	72° / 63°
Paris	Mostly Cloudy	70° / 55°
Busan	Rain	70° / 63°
Rome	Partly Cloudy	79° / 59°
Salem	Sunny	70° / 47°
San Francisco	Mostly Sunny	52 / 70 °
Seoul	Partly Cloudy	73° / 52°
Tokyo	Cloudy	68° / 61°
Washington, DC	Sunny	66° / 43°

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY	FEET	
3:30 AM	Low Tide	-0.16
10:22 AM	High Tide	1.76
3:52 PM	Low Tide	1.12
8:49 PM	High Tide	1.73

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF OCTOBER 8, 2023

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA117	9:50AM	10:30AM	Daily

SAIPAN- NARITA (NRT)

UA824	7:25AM	9:55AM	1, 3, 5

GUAM-MANILA (MNL)

PR 111	5:55AM	7:55AM	Daily
UA193	6:55PM	10:55PM	2, 5 via Palau
UA183	7:20PM	9:10PM	Daily

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

OZ626/703	4:20AM	10:35PM	1, 4, 5, 7
7C3403/2305	4:45AM	10:20PM	Daily
UA117/183	9:50AM	9:10PM	Daily via Guam
UA117/193	9:50AM	10:55PM	2, 5 via Guam, Palau

SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)

TW308	3:15AM	7:00AM	Daily
OZ626	4:20AM	7:55AM	1, 4, 5, 7
7C3403	4:45AM	8:35AM	Daily
7C3405	4:10PM	7:45PM	Daily

SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)

7C3451	3:20AM	6:30AM	1, 4, 5, 7

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA174	8:00AM	8:50AM	Daily

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

UA825	9:25PM	1:50AM+1	2, 4, 7

MANILA (MNL)-GUAM

UA184	10:25PM	4:25AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7
UA192	10:25PM	6:10AM+1	2, 5 via Palau
PR110	10:30PM	4:25AM+1	Daily
UA184	11:50PM	5:50AM+1	2, 5

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

OZ702/625	12:05PM	2:55AM+1	3, 4, 6, 7
UA184/174	10:25PM	8:50AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6,7 via Guam
UA192/174	10:25PM	8:50AM+1	2, 5 via Palau, Guam
7C2306/3406	11:10PM	3:10PM+1	Daily
UA184/174	11:50PM	8:50AM+1	2, 5 via Guam

INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN

7C3406	9:30AM	3:10PM	Daily
TW307	8:30PM	2:15AM+1	Daily
OZ625	9:25PM	2:55AM+1	3, 4, 6, 7
7C3404	10:10PM	3:40AM+1	Daily

BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN

7C3452	9:35PM	2:20AM+1	3, 4, 6, 7

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines; PR, Philippine Airlines; TW, T'Way Air; OZ, Asiana Airlines; 7C, Jeju Air; BX, Air Busan • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JUNE 1, 2022

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1301	8:30	9:00	Daily
1302	11:00	11:30	Mon/Wed/Fri
1302	12:00	12:30	Tues/Thurs/Sat/Sun
1303	15:30	16:00	Daily

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3101	9:30	10:00	Daily
3102	13:00	13:30	Tues/Thurs/Sat/Sun
3102	14:00	14:30	Mon/Wed/Fri
3103	16:30	17:00	Daily

ROTA TO GUAM

LIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3401	12:00	12:30	Mon/Wed/Fri

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
4301	13:00	13:30	Mon/Wed/Fri

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	10:00	10:15	Daily
1208	14:00	14:15	Daily
1209	15:00	15:15	Daily
1210	16:00	16:15	Daily
1211	17:00	17:15	Daily

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	10:30	10:45	Daily
2108	14:30	14:45	Daily
2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
2111	17:30	17:45	Daily

Business

Putin's Beijing visit highlights China's support for Russia

TAIPEI, Taiwan (AP)—Russian President Vladimir Putin is expected to meet this week with Chinese leaders in Beijing on a visit that underscores China's support for Moscow during its war in Ukraine.

The two countries have forged an informal alliance against the United States and other democratic nations that is now complicated by the Israel-Hamas war. China has sought to balance its ties with Israel with its economic relations with Iran and Syria, which are strongly backed by Russia.

Putin arrived in Beijing on Tuesday with an honor guard meeting his plane. His visit is also a show of support for Chinese leader Xi Jinping's signature Belt and Road initiative to build infrastructure and expand China's overseas influence.

AP

Russia's President Vladimir Putin, center, arrives at Beijing Capital International Airport to attend the third Belt and Road Forum in Beijing, Tuesday, Oct. 17, 2023.

In an interview to Chinese state media, Putin praised the massive but loosely linked BRI projects.

"Yes, we see that some people consider it an attempt by the People's Republic of China to put someone under its thumb, but we see otherwise, we just see desire for cooperation," he told state broadcaster CCTV, according to a transcript released by the Kremlin on Monday.

The Russian leader will be among the highest profile guests at a gathering marking the 10th anniversary of Xi's announcement of the BRI policy, which has laden countries such as Zambia and Sri Lanka with heavy debt after they signed contracts with Chinese companies to build roads, airports and other public works they could not otherwise afford.

Asked by reporters Friday about his visit, Putin said it would encompass talks on Belt and Road-related projects, which he said Moscow wants to link with efforts by an economic alliance of ex-Soviet Union nations mostly located in Central Asia to "achieve common development goals." He also downplayed the impact of China's economic influence in a region that Russia has long considered its backyard and where it has worked to maintain political and military clout.

"We don't have any contradictions here, on the contrary, there is a certain synergy," Putin said.

Putin said he and Xi will also discuss growing economic and financial ties between Moscow and Beijing.

Beijing and Moscow have financial ties in energy, high-tech and financial industries. China has also grown in importance as an export destination for Moscow.

Alexander Gabuev, director of Carnegie Russia Eurasia Center, said that from China's view, "Russia is a safe neighbor that is friendly, that is a source of cheap raw materials, that's a support for Chinese initiatives on the global stage and that's also a source of military technologies, some of those that China doesn't have."

"For Russia, China is its lifeline, economic lifeline in its brutal repression against Ukraine," Gabuev told The Associated Press.

"It's the major market for Russian commodities, it's a country that provides its currency and payment system to settle Russia's trade with the outside world—with China itself, but also with many other countries, and is also the major source of sophisticated technological imports, including dual-use goods that go into the Russian military machine."

Gabuev said that while Moscow and Beijing will be unlikely to forge a full-fledged military alliance, their defense cooperation will grow.

"I don't expect that Russia and China will create a military alliance," Gabuev said. "Both countries are self-sufficient in terms of security and they benefit from partnering, but neither really requires a security guarantee from the other. And they preach strategic autonomy."

"There will be no military alliance, but there will be closer military cooperation, more interoperability, more cooperation on projecting force together, including in places like the Arctic and more joint effort to develop a missile defense that makes the U.S. nuclear planning and planning of the U.S. and its allies in Asia and in Europe more complicated," he added.

Ex-FTX exec was 'horrified' last year when he learned of a $13B shortfall

NEW YORK (AP)—A former FTX executive and onetime billionaire testified against the cryptocurrency exchange's founder, Sam Bankman-Fried, on Monday at his fraud trial, saying his admiration for him faded as he watched excessive spending on investments, property and celebrities precede a $13 billion shortfall that left him feeling "blindsided and horrified."

Nishad Singh, the former head of engineering at FTX, was part of Bankman-Fried's trusted inner circle before the cryptocurrency empire collapsed last November. Bankman-Fried was arrested in the Bahamas a month later. Singh pleaded guilty to fraud charges and agreed to testify against the man he'd known since high school.

Singh told a Manhattan federal court jury that he "felt really betrayed" when he learned in a private conversation with Bankman-Fried on the balcony of their penthouse apartment in September 2022 that there was not sufficient assets to cover $13 billion that had been spent largely on investments, properties, advertising and donations.

"I was blindsided and horrified," he said, adding that it seemed five years of hard work was wasted and that "something that I thought was a beautiful source for good had turned out to be so evil."

At another point, Singh said that the spending was "too large or didn't make sense" and "it all reeked of excess and flashiness."

Singh said he felt suicidal for several days about the crimes and the collapse of FTX.

Bankman-Fried, 31, has been jailed since August, when a judge concluded that he'd tried to influence potential trial witnesses and revoked the $250 million personal recognizance bond that had permitted him to live with his parents in Palo Alto, California, after his December extradition from the Bahamas. He has pleaded not guilty to all charges.

As the trial entered its third week, Singh became the third former member of the inner circle to testify against Bankman-Fried after reaching a cooperation deal in a bid for leniency at sentencing.

Singh, who grew up in the San Francisco area, said he joined Alameda Research in 2017—the year it was founded—and considered Bankman-Fried to be a "formidable character" who he'd always found intimidating.

"So I had a lot of admiration and respect for him," he said. "Over time, a lot of that eroded. And I grew distrustful."

Singh, who joined FTX after its 2019 founding, cited Bankman-Fried's "excessive" spending as a catalyst for his change in attitude in 2022 as he watched Bankman-Fried's opulent tendencies grow with the purchase of luxury properties and his billion dollar partnership with a California investment firm with connections to A-list celebrities like Amazon founder Jeff Bezos and the actor Leonardo DiCaprio.

He said $205 million was spent to rename the Miami venue where the Miami Heat played its home games after FTX and another $150 million was spent on a Major League Baseball endorsement, along with millions more on advertising featuring star quarterback Tom Brady and comedian Larry David.

Singh said he had little influence over Bankman-Fried. He cited the moment when Bankman-Fried purchased a luxury residence in the Bahamas that was "super ostentatious."

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Trump returning to civil fraud trial, but Cohen won't be there

NEW YORK (AP)—Former President Donald Trump returns to a New York City courthouse Tuesday to be a spectator at the civil fraud trial threatening to disrupt his real estate empire. Trump voluntarily attended the first three days of the trial, Oct. 2-4. He turned his appearance into a campaign stop by complaining about the case at every opportunity to TV cameras in the hallway outside the courtroom. Now he will be back, according to his lawyer, accompanied by bolstered security inside and outside the Manhattan courthouse. His appearance was initially supposed to coincide with testimony by Michael Cohen, his former attorney turned foe. But Cohen's planned appearance on the witness stand was delayed until at least next week, due to a health problem. Cohen said on X, formerly known as Twitter, that he isn't dodging Trump. On Monday, he said he expects his estranged ex-boss to be in the courtroom when he does testify. "I am thankful the medical condition, while incredibly painful, does not require an immediate procedure," Cohen said in a text message. "I anticipate appearing as soon as the pain subsides. When I do testify, I am certain Donald will be in attendance, sitting with his lawyers at the defendant's table."

Reese's $25,000 promotion may violate sweepstakes laws

Reese's may be in violation of state and federal laws with its new sweepstakes offer currently advertised on packs of peanut butter cups. The promotion on two-cup packages reads "You could win $25,000" and, in smaller print, "See details inside." But only after consumers have bought and opened a package can they see the small print: no purchase is necessary to enter the sweepstakes. The Reese's contest was first reported Monday by Edgar Dworsky, a consumer advocate and former assistant attorney general in Massachusetts, who runs the Consumer World website.

Sweepstakes are primarily governed by state laws, which require that no purchase is necessary to participate. A contest that requires a purchase is a lottery, which is subject to different rules.

Three federal agencies—Federal Trade Commission, the Federal Communications Commission and the U.S. Postal Service—also enforce laws governing sweepstakes depending on the type of promotion. The Postal Service requires mailed sweepstakes offers to make clear that no purchase is necessary, for example. The FTC doesn't govern sweepstakes specifically, but has broad laws prohibiting "unfair and deceptive acts." Hershey Co., that Pennsylvania candy-maker that owns the Reese's brand, said late Monday that its website contains full details of the promotion. It also said some packages have QR codes that link consumers to more information.

Nation

AS AID HELD UP FOR GAZA

Biden heads to Israel and Jordan

RAFAH, Gaza Strip (AP)—The U.S. hoped to break a deadlock over delivering aid to increasingly desperate civilians in besieged Gaza following a brutal attack by Hamas militants, as President Joe Biden was set to head to Israel and Jordan on Wednesday.

Aid workers warned that life in Gaza was near complete collapse because of the Israeli siege, with hundreds of thousands of people seeking shelter, ever-decreasing water supplies and power running out at hospitals.

At the Rafah crossing, Gaza's only connection to Egypt, truckloads of aid were waiting to go into the tiny, densely populated territory, and trapped civilians—many of them Palestinians with dual nationalities—were hoping desperately to get out.

Mediators were trying to reach a cease-fire to open the border, which shut down last week after Israeli airstrikes, but by early Tuesday it was unclear who was keeping the crossing closed.

AP

President Joe Biden listens as he meets with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in New York, Sept. 20, 2023.

Gen. Erik Kurilla, the head of U.S. Central Command, arrived in Tel Aviv for meetings with Israeli military authorities ahead of a Biden visit planned for Wednesday to signal White House support for the country. Biden will also travel to Jordan to meet with Arab leaders amid fears that the fighting could expand into a broader regional conflict.

U.S. Secretary of State Anthony Blinken, who had returned to Israel after a six-country tour through Arab nations, said in Tel Aviv that the U.S. and Israel had agreed to develop a plan to enable humanitarian aid to reach civilians in Gaza. There were few details, but the plan would include "the possibility of creating areas to help keep civilians out of harm's way."

Israel maintained punishing airstrikes across Gaza as a ground invasion loomed, while Hamas militants kept up a barrage of rocket attacks, and tensions mounted near the Israel-Lebanon border.

At least 2,778 people have been killed and 9,700 wounded in Gaza, according to the Health Ministry there. More than 1,400 Israelis have been killed, the vast majority civilians massacred in Hamas' Oct. 7 assault.

The combination of airstrikes, dwindling supplies and Israel's mass evacuation order for the north of the Gaza Strip has thrown the tiny territory's 2.3 million people into upheaval and caused increasing desperation. More than 1 million Palestinians have fled their homes, and 60% are now in the approximately 14-kilometer-long (8 mile) area south of the evacuation zone, according to the U.N.

In Gaza, hospitals were on the verge of losing electricity, threatening the lives of thousands of patients, and hundreds of thousands of Palestinians displaced from their homes searched for bread. With taps dry, many have resorted to drinking dirty or sewage-filled water, risking the spread of disease.

The Israeli military says it is trying to clear civilians for their safety ahead of a major campaign against Hamas in Gaza's north, where it says the militants have extensive networks of tunnels and rocket launchers. Much of Hamas' military infrastructure is in residential areas.

Those fleeing northern Gaza still faced airstrikes in the south. Before dawn Monday, a strike in the town of Rafah collapsed a building sheltering three families who had evacuated from Gaza City. At least 12 people were killed and nine others remained buried under rubble, survivors said.

Israel evacuated towns near its northern border with Lebanon, where the military has exchanged fire repeatedly with the Iranian-backed Hezbollah group. Israel fought a vicious monthlong war with Hezbollah in 2006 that ended in a stalemate and a tense detente between the two sides.

Speaking to the Israeli Knesset, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu warned Iran and Hezbollah, "Don't test us in the north. Don't make the mistake of the past. Today, the price you will pay will be far heavier."

Soon after he spoke, the Knesset floor was evacuated as rockets headed toward Jerusalem. Sirens in Tel Aviv prompted U.S. and Israeli officials to take shelter in a bunker, officials said.

GOP will try to elect Trump ally Jordan as House speaker

WASHINGTON (AP)—Republicans will try to elect a firebrand Rep. Jim Jordan as the new House speaker, elevating a chief ally of Donald Trump to a center-seat of U.S. power and showing just how far the hard-right flank has moved into the GOP mainstream.

On Tuesday, the House is scheduled to start voting at noon in what could become a showdown for the gavel. At least a handful of holdout Republicans are refusing to give Jordan their votes, viewing the Ohio Republican as too extreme for the powerful position of House speaker, second in line to the presidency.

But with public pressure bearing down on lawmakers from Trump's allies including Fox News' Sean Hannity, it's not clear how long the holdouts can last. Jordan swiftly flipped dozens of detractors in a matter of days, shoring up reluctant Republicans who have few options left two weeks after Kevin McCarthy's ouster.

"The American people deserve to have their Congress and House of Representatives working, and you can't have that happen until you get a speaker," Jordan said after a late-night meeting Monday at the Capitol.

As the private meeting turned into a venting session of angry Republicans, he acknowledged: "We've got a few more people to talk to, listen to."

The political climb has been steep for Jordan, the combative Judiciary Committee chairman and a founding member of the right-flank Freedom Caucus. Upset that a small band of hard-liners have upended the House, Republicans have watched their majority control of the chamber descend into chaos since McCarthy's sudden removal from the job. All House business has ground to a halt.

To seize the gavel, Jordan will need almost the full majority of his colleagues behind him in a House floor vote, as Democrats are certain to back their own nominee, Leader Hakeem Jeffries of New York.

Jordan fell more than 50 votes short during internal party voting last Friday, after Majority Leader Steve Scalise, the party's first nominee to replace McCarthy, abandoned his bid after Jordan's allies refused to follow the party's own rules and back him in a floor vote.

But Jordan can rely on Trump's support as well as pressure on colleagues from an army of grass-roots activists who recognize him from cable news and fiery performances at committee hearings. Republicans say it will be hard for rank-and-file lawmakers to oppose him in a public floor vote.

Rep. Matt Gaetz, R-Fla., who engineered McCarthy's ouster by a handful of hard-liners, publicly praised each lawmaker who has flipped to Jordan's column—and berated those who have not.

"Thank you Rep. Ann Wagner!" Gaetz posted on social media, after the Missouri Republican announced her support.

Wagner said she and Jordan had spoken Monday morning at length, "and he has allayed my concerns about keeping the government open with conservative funding, the need for strong border security, our need for consistent international support in times of war and unrest."

Others also announced their support, including the House Armed Services Chairman Mike Rogers of Alabama. Picking up those two backers, Jordan said earlier Monday, was "really big."

Schools near Maui wildfire burn zone are reopening

LAHAINA, Hawaii (AP)—Children take their places at folding tables on a church patio several miles from where their school burned down. Plastic tubs hold brand new textbooks quickly shipped from a publisher. Recess is on the resort golf course across the street.

» Parents wrestle with whether to send kids back

The wind-driven wildfire that leveled the historic Maui town of Lahaina this summer displaced many pupils not just from their homes, but from their schools, forcing their families and education officials to scramble to find other ways to teach them.

Now, more than two months after the Aug. 8 wildfire killed at least 98 people, the three public schools that survived are set to reopen this week, posing an emotional crossroads for traumatized children and their families as they decide whether to go back to those campuses or continue at the other schools that took them in.

Some parents said they won't send their children back because they worry the fire left toxins behind, despite assurances from education officials that the campuses are safe.

"I'm feeling optimistic about it and grateful we get to go back," said Cailee Cuaresma, a 10th-grader at Lahainaluna High School. "I'm grateful our school is still standing."

For the past month, Cuaresma has attended classes at the makeshift campus of Sacred Hearts School, a Catholic school founded in 1862. Most of the school burned down, but its leaders quickly got classes up and running at Sacred Hearts Mission Church 10 miles (16 kilometers) away.

Sacred Hearts and other private schools across the state took in displaced public school students, such as Cuaresma, while offering a year of free tuition. Other students bused more than 45 minutes away to public schools on the other side of Maui or opted for remote classes.

On a recent school day at Sacred Hearts' temporary site, teachers moved students between pockets of shade to keep them out of the relentless Lahaina sun. Principal Tonata Lolesio told students assembled on cushioned pews in a chapel that it might be two years before they can return to a rebuilt school.

Asia

ASIAN BRIEFS

Another powerful quake shakes quake-devastated region in western Afghanistan

ISLAMABAD (AP)—Another 6.3 magnitude earthquake struck part of western Afghanistan on Sunday after thousands of people died and entire villages were flattened by devastating quakes a week earlier. The latest quake was centered about 30 kilometers (19 miles) outside the city of Herat, the capital of Herat province, and was 6 kilometers (4 miles) below the surface, the U.S. Geological Survey said. It's the fourth quake the USGS has measured at 6.3 magnitude in the same area in just over a week. Aid group Save the Children said four people have died and that Herat Regional Hospital has received 153 injured. Everything in the Baloch area of Rabat Sangi district has collapsed. Several villages have been destroyed, according to the aid group. Authorities have given lower casualty numbers. Sayed Kazim Rafiqi, 42, a Herat city resident, said he had never seen such devastation before with the majority of houses damaged and "people terrified." Rafiqi and others headed to the hospital to donate much-needed blood. "We have to help in any way possible," he said. The initial earthquakes on Oct. 7 flattened whole villages in Herat and were among the most destructive quakes in the country's recent history.

Russia's foreign minister will visit N. Korea amid claims of weapons supplied to Moscow

MOSCOW (AP)—Russia's foreign minister will visit North Korea this week, the Foreign Ministry said Monday, days after the United States claimed Pyongyang had delivered munitions and military equipment to Russia for use in the fighting in Ukraine. Sergey Lavrov will be in North Korea on Wednesday and Thursday, the ministry said in a brief statement that did not specify whom he would meet or the aims of the trip. The White House said Friday that more than 1,000 containers of equipment and ammunition have been sent to Russia from North Korea. North Korean leader Kim Jong Un traveled to Russia last month to meet President Vladimir Putin and visit key military sites, triggering speculation about a possible North Korean plan to refill Russia's munition stores that have been drained by the protracted conflict with Ukraine. White House National Security Council spokesman John Kirby said that the U.S. believes Kim is seeking sophisticated Russian weapons technologies in return for the munitions to boost North Korea's military and nuclear program. The White House released images that it said show the containers were loaded onto a Russian-flagged ship before being moved via train to southwestern Russia. The containers were shipped between Sept. 7 and Oct. 1, according to the White House.

Cambodia opens new airport to serve Angkor Wat as it seeks to boost tourist arrivals

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia (AP)—Commercial operations began Monday at Cambodia's newest and biggest airport, designed to serve as an upgraded gateway to the country's major tourist attraction, the centuries-old Angkor Wat temple complex in the northwestern province of Siem Reap. A Bangkok Airways flight from Thailand was the first to land, with 16 additional flights scheduled for the first day of operations at the Siem Reap-Angkor International Airport. The airport, which was built at a cost of about $1.1 billion on 700 hectares (1,730 acres) of land about 40 kilometers (25 miles) east of Angkor Wat, boasts a 3,600-meter (11,810-foot) long runway. Construction began in 2020 to replace the old airport, about 5 kilometers (3.1 miles) from the temple site, which is being retired in part because of fear that vibrations from frequent flights were damaging the temples' foundations. The new airport can handle 7 million passengers a year, with plans to augment it to handle 12 million passengers annually from 2040. It was constructed under a 55-year build-operate-transfer (BOT) program between Cambodia and China. According to the Ministry of Tourism, Cambodia received some 3.5 million international tourists in the first eight months of 2023, while for the whole of 2019—the last year before the coronavirus pandemi —it received some 6.6 million foreign visitors. Tourism is considered one of the main pillars supporting Cambodia's economy. Deputy Prime Minister Vongsey Vissoth, who headed the ceremony marking the start of operations, said the new airport will be officially inaugurated on Nov. 16 by Prime Minister Hun Manet and top Chinese officials. Another Chinese-funded airport is being constructed at a cost of $1.5 billion to serve the capital Phnom Penh. The new Phnom Penh international airport, formally known as the Techo International Airport, is set on 2,600 h hectares (6,425 acres) and scheduled for completion in 2024.

Canada forges agreement to help PH track illegal fishing vessels using satellite technology

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—Canada will help the Philippines detect illegal fishing with its satellite surveillance system under a new agreement, Philippine officials said Monday. The arrangement gives the National Coast Watch Center of the Philippines access to data from Canada's "Dark Vessel Detection System," which harnesses satellite technology to track illegal fishermen even if they switch off their location transmitting devices, the Department of Foreign Affairs in Manila said. Illegal and unregulated fishing is a problem across the Philippine archipelago, including in disputed areas of the South China Sea. The Philippine coast guard has accused Chinese coast guard ships and fishing vessels of switching off their location-transmitting devices to avoid detection and surveillance. Canadian and Philippine officials signed the agreement last week on the sidelines of talks held in the Canadian capital of Ottawa to discuss ways to strengthen relations between the two countries, the Foreign Affairs Department said without providing other details.

China claims virtually the entire South China Sea on historical grounds but this was invalidated by an arbitration tribunal ruling in 2016. China refused to participate in the arbitration sought by the Philippines, rejected the ruling as a sham and continues to defy it. Aside from China and the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Taiwan and Brunei have had overlapping territorial claims in the South China Sea, which straddles one of the world's busiest sea lanes. Canada is among several Western countries that have recognized the 2016 arbitration ruling and called on countries, including China, to respect it.

World

WITH HUMANITRIAN AID BLOCKED AT BORDER

Gaza draws closer to total collapse

AP

An injured Palestinian man is carried on a stretcher into the al-Shifa Hospital, following Israeli airstrikes on Gaza City, central Gaza Strip, Monday, Oct. 16, 2023.

RAFAH, Gaza Strip (AP)—Truckloads of aid idled at Egypt's border with Gaza as residents and humanitarian groups pleaded Monday for water, food and fuel for dying generators, saying the tiny Palestinian territory sealed off by Israel after last week's rampage by Hamas was near total collapse.

U.S. President Joe Biden planned to travel to Israel on Wednesday to signal White House support for the country and to Jordan to meet with Arab leaders. U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken announced the trip early Tuesday in Tel Aviv during his second visit to Israel in less than a week amid fears that the fighting could expand into a broader regional conflict.

In Gaza, hospitals were on the verge of losing electricity, threatening the lives of thousands of patients, and hundreds of thousands of Palestinians displaced from their homes searched for bread. Israel maintained punishing airstrikes across Gaza as a ground invasion loomed, while Hamas militants kept up a barrage of rocket attacks, and tensions mounted near the Israel-Lebanon border.

More than a week after Israel cut off entry of any supplies, all eyes were on the Rafah crossing, Gaza's only connection to Egypt. Mediators were trying to reach a cease-fire that would let in aid and let out trapped foreigners. Israeli airstrikes forced the crossing to shut down last week, but it remained unclear Monday which of the regional actors was keeping the crossing closed.

Blinken, who returned to Israel after a six-country tour through Arab nations, said the U.S. and Israel had agreed to develop a plan to enable humanitarian aid to reach civilians in Gaza. There were few details, but the plan would include "the possibility of creating areas to help keep civilians out of harm's way."

"We share Israel's concern that Hamas may seize or destroy aid entering Gaza or otherwise prevent it from reaching the people who need it," Blinken said.

Israel evacuated towns near its northern border with Lebanon, where the military has exchanged fire repeatedly with the Iranian-backed Hezbollah group.

Speaking to the Israeli Knesset, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu warned Iran and Hezbollah, "Don't test us in the north. Don't make the mistake of the past. Today, the price you will pay will be far heavier," referring to Israel's 2006 war with Hezbollah, which operates out of Lebanon.

Kyiv: Russia's assault on key eastern Ukraine city appears to be weakening

KYIV, Ukraine (AP)—A dayslong attempt by Russian forces to storm a strategically important city in eastern Ukraine appears to be running out of steam, Kyiv officials said Monday, as the Kremlin's war entered its 600th day.

Ukrainian forces repelled 15 Russian attacks from four directions on Avdiivka over the previous 24 hours, the Ukrainian General Staff said.

That compared with up to 60 attacks a day in the middle of last week, according to Vitalii Barabash, head of the city administration. The slackening suggests the Russian effort to capture Avdiivka has "deflated," Barabash said.

A Washington-based think tank broadly concurred with that assessment. "Russian forces continued offensive operations aimed at encircling Avdiivka … but have yet to make further gains amid a likely decreasing tempo of Russian operations in the area," the Institute for the Study of War said in analysis published late Sunday.

Russia's ambassador to the United Nations, Vassily Nebenzia, told a U.N. Security Council meeting last Friday that the ramped-up attacks in the east amounted to a new stage in Moscow's campaign in Ukraine.

With the looming onset of wintry conditions that will limit military operations, both sides have been seeking battlefield breakthroughs that could invigorate their efforts and raise morale.

Ukraine launched its own counteroffensive about four months ago. It has made some headway but the limited success has underlined the daunting challenge of taking on the Kremlin's more numerous forces.

Kyiv's Western allies insist that their military and financial support for Ukraine will continue, even as the Israeli-Hamas war rages and competes for resources.

U.S. national security adviser Jake Sullivan said Sunday the Biden administration will ask Congress for a combined aid package for Ukraine and Israel worth more than $2 billion.

Ukrainian officials have said their troops are holding out against fierce Russian efforts to wrest control of Avdiivka, a heavily fortified city.

Good Housekeeping

HANDOUT

A long wood table helps to serve as a visual "anchor" in this dining space.

HANDOUT

Mid-century modern wood chairs are paired with a classic oval shaped dining table.

Ideas for dining spaces

By CATHY HOBBS
Tribune News Service

It is often said that the kitchen is the "heart" of the home, where a family often gathers as well as entertains its guests. An extension of this is often one's dining space. These two areas of the home lend themselves to specific needs relating to gathering, aesthetics and functionality.

When it comes to dining spaces, these days, many homeowners may also desire flexibility. From size, shape, and materials, there are several options to evaluate and consider when selecting both tables and chairs for your home.

Tables

Tables come in all shapes and sizes as well as finishes. The first place to start should be size then shape.

Table Selection Tips

Measure your space to determine the "footprint" needed for your table.

Evaluate what size would work best. Typical shapes include rectangular, oval, round and square.

Select your desired table material based on durability, design aesthetics and budget.

Materials

Wood

Wood is a great choice when looking for durability. From tables that are intended for more formal dining rooms to those that are made by artisans, you can't go wrong with wood.

Lacquer

Lacquer is a popular choice for those looking for a modern, sleek vibe. Lacquer can also allow one to integrate unique or custom colors into a space.

Glass

Glass is an ideal choice for smaller spaces as its transparency instantly allows a space to feel open and airy as opposed to closed in.

Shapes

Round or Oval versus Rectangular

If working with smaller rooms or spaces, oval or round is the best solution as it allows for increased circulation and flow.

Square tables work well in small environments such as studio apartments or where there is a need to seat 2-4 people.

Rectangular tables are ideal for larger rooms and for those looking to accommodate large groups of people at a single table.

HANDOUT

An artisan crafted solid wood table helps to create a modern, hip vibe in this industrial space.

Shopping hacks for chairs

Dos

■ Do buy chairs for comfort.

■ Do buy 1-2 extra chairs in case one gets damaged, and you are unable to source.

■ Do source locally when possible.

Don'ts

■ Don't purchase chairs in fabrics or materials that are hard to clean or become easily damaged.

■ Don't ignore durability elements such as solid construction.

■ Don't purchase chairs in odd numbers instead think of purchasing as a set our grouping.

What do I need to know when hiring interior painters?

By PAUL F. P. POGUE
Ask Angi

Painting interior rooms offers a fast, relatively inexpensive, and effective way to give your home a facelift. Here are some tips on hiring a painter for your home, what you need to keep in mind if you do it yourself, and a few techniques you might not have thought of!

You can paint one room to spruce it up or reinvigorate your entire home with a complete interior paint job. You'll pay an average of $1,000 for most jobs, but it varies widely based on home size and complexity. Overall, expect to pay about $2.75 per square foot of the room for painting the walls and $4.70 per square foot if you include trim as well as walls.

THINGS TO CONSIDER

Test your colors in advance

Different paints work in different ways depending on the surface. Test out a small amount of the color in an area of the wall that doesn't get seen very often, and check out how it looks.

Don't skimp on materials

Painting is one of those jobs where quality materials matter a great deal. Get name-brand paint (or ensure your pro does) and make sure you pay for the good stuff. A few dollars saved right now can cut off years of life from your painting job.

Buy from a specialty paint store if you can

You can get good paint from a big-box store, but stores exclusively dedicated to paint are more likely to have staff with expertise that can guide you on this journey.

Consider hiring a designer

Different paints work in various ways with each other. Get a designer or a pro with extensive knowledge of color theory and accents who can advise you on how colors complement each other.

Questions to ask

Interior painting is a very visible job that will make big changes to your home, so you want to hire the best possible contractor. Here are five questions to ask to help ensure the best possible job.

What's included in your estimate?

Having your pro explain your estimate will help you understand each part of your job and ensure your contractor isn't skipping any important steps like prep. Avoid pros who aren't willing to explain their estimate or don't include tasks like prep or cleanup.

Are you insured?

Insurance will keep you and your home safe in an accident. Never hire an uninsured pro or one who refuses to show proof of coverage. This can make you responsible for any injuries during the project.

Do you prep?

Prepping is a crucial part of any painting job. Never hire a painting contractor who cannot provide precise preparation details. Skipping this step will result in chipping, bubbling, and peeling paint, which will require extensive re-painting.

How will you protect my home's interior?

1. Interior painting projects can be messy. Hire a pro with a plan to keep other parts of your home safe and free of stains. Overlooking protection can result in ruined flooring and furniture.

What kind of paint do you use?

Most reputable pros will use a name-brand paint. Working with a contractor who uses cut-rate paint can result in premature bubbling, dulling and chipping.

Life & Style

Miniature 'Star Wars' X-wing gets over $3M at auction

DALLAS (AP)—A miniature X-wing Starfighter used in a "Star Wars" film sold for over $3 million during an auction over the weekend of items both collected and created by longtime Hollywood model-maker Greg Jein.

The collection amassed by Jein, who died last year at the age of 76, brought in about $13.6 million during an event at Heritage Auctions in Dallas. The auction house said that everyone from model-makers to collectors and science-fiction fans attended, making the event its best-attended in years.

Joe Maddalena, Heritage's executive vice president and a longtime friend of Jein's, said in a news release Monday that the auction was "a profound testament to my friend as both a visual-effects master and one of the great collectors."

AP

A miniature model called "Red Leader," a X-wing Starfighter from the 1977 film "Star War, Episode IV, A New Hope," sits on display at Heritage Auctions, Aug. 30, 2023, in Irving, Texas.

Jein not only had an Oscar and Emmy-nominated career making miniature models for nearly half a century, but he also spent a lifetime collecting costumes, props, scripts, artwork, photographs and models from the shows he loved.

The Red Leader X-wing Starfighter that was used in the 1977 film "Star Wars: Episode IV—A New Hope" sold for about $3.1 million after a bidding duel between two collectors, the auction house said. Also going for an eye-popping amount was a "Star Wars" Stormtrooper costume that sold for $645,000.

A rare surviving spacesuit from Stanley Kubrick's 1968 film "2001: A Space Odyssey" sold for $447,000.

Jein was a fan of " Star Trek " before he worked on the franchise—and some of the items that he collected were popular at the auction. A filming model of the "SS Botany Bay" vessel from "Star Trek: The Original Series" from the 1960s went for $200,000 while prop devices from that series like a hero phaser went for $187,500 and a tricorder garnered $175,000.

Jein, who grew up in Los Angeles, was still early in his career when he led the team that created the mothership for Steven Spielberg's 1977 film "Close Encounters of the Third Kind." The model that appears gigantic in the movie is just over 5 feet (1.5 meters) long and now part of the collection at the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum in Washington, D.C. A small preliminary model, which is about 5 inches (12 centimeters) long, brought in $55,000 at the auction.

Iranian film director, wife found stabbed dead in their home

TEHRAN, Iran (AP)—Noted Iranian film director Dariush Mehrjui and his wife were stabbed to death in their home by an unknown assailant, state media reported Sunday.

The official IRNA news agency quoted Hossein Fazeli, a judiciary official, as saying that Mehrjhi and his wife, Vahideh Mohammadifar, were discovered dead with knife wounds in their necks.

Fazeli said the director's daughter, Mona Mehrjui, found the bodies when she went to visit her father Saturday night at the home in a suburb about 30 kilometers (19 miles) west of the capital, Tehran.

The report said authorities were investigating and gave no speculation on a motive, though the wife had complained about a knife threat on social media in recent weeks.

Mehrjui , 83, was known as cofounder of Iran's film new wave in the early 1970s that mainly focused on realism. He received many awards, including a Silver Hugo from the Chicago International Film Festival in 1998 and a Golden Seashell at the San Sebastián International Film Festival 1993.

Mehrjui studied in the cinema program at the University of California, Los Angeles in the early 1960s.

Albanian novelist awarded French Legion of Honor

TIRANA, Albania (AP)—Albanian novelist Ismail Kadare was awarded the Grand Officer of the Legion of Honor title by French President Emmanuel Macron on Monday.

Macron arrived in Tirana after a summit of European Union leaders with Western Balkan countries earlier in the day. He didn't attend the talks because of the attack in which a teacher was fatally stabbed and three other people were wounded at a school in northern France.

In a long speech describing Kadare's different novels throughout his writing career and how he had resisted Albania's communist government, Macron awarded the title "for his works, his courage to rise up against a dictatorial system ... and a defender of freedom, a great writer of humanity."

Kadare, 87, has long been mentioned as a possible contender for the Nobel Literature Prize. He has been well-known internationally since his "The General of the Dead Army" novel was published in 1963 when Albania was governed by the communist government of late dictator Enver Hoxha.

Madonna's Celebration Tour kicks off in London

LONDON (AP)—Madonna kicked off her career-spanning Celebration Tour at London's O2 Arena on Saturday night, marking her first performance since suffering what her manager called a "serious bacterial infection" that led to hospitalization in an intensive care unit for several days back in June.

Madonna

"I'm on the road to recovery and incredibly grateful for all the blessings in my life," the pop superstar wrote on Instagram this summer, shortly after news of the ICU stay broke. "My focus now is on my health and getting stronger and I assure you, I'll be back with you as soon as I can."

On stage, Madonna, 65, said she'd had a "crazy year" that neither she nor her doctors thought she'd make it through. She said her children spurred her on and that she had to "survive for them." The opening night of the tour also marked the 27th birthday of daughter Lourdes Leon, who appeared on stage with her mother.

After a brief technical hitch, the opening night of the tour was indeed a celebration. Madonna played songs from across her vast career, including studio recordings and footage drawing on four decades of hits. On the set list were iconic songs from "Like a Prayer" to "Holiday" to "Vogue" to "La Isla Bonita." She also included more niche tracks such as "Die Another Day" from the 2002 Bond movie of the same name.

Wife's puzzling behavior is an obstacle for couple

DEAR ABBY: I'm a lesbian. My wife and I have been married for nine years, but since COVID and my mother's death, we have had problems. I met a man online; he's an actor. We grew close via the internet. When my wife found out, we fought, and this man and I haven't been as close.

Although we mended our relationship and I love her, I seem to always wonder. About a year ago, I got hit on by another actor on Instagram, and we also grew close until my wife found out. I stopped, but I still maintain contact with these men, and I'm not sure why.

I wonder if I'm happy with my wife or if it would be better with someone else. I wonder if I'm staying with her for love or for comfort. I'm not sure. I keep questioning my identity and my life. Any advice?

LACKING CERTAINTY IN CALIFORNIA

DEAR LACKING CERTAINTY: If you were getting everything you need from your marriage, you wouldn't be "wondering" and reaching out to members of the opposite sex. It is important for you AND your wife that you find the answers to your very important questions.

Because you are unsure about the depth of your commitment to your wife as well as your identity, your next step should be to discuss this with a licensed mental health professional. Your doctor or health insurance company can refer you to someone who is qualified. Your local LGBTQ community center may also be able to help. Please don't wait.

■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: A family friend, "Simone," makes the time we spend together unbearable. She's married to my husband's best friend, "Earl." We see them often and spend many holidays together. Before Earl married Simone, we thought she was a pretty normal person and a great match for him. Over time, we have come to realize that she's anything but.

Simone is loud and dramatic, and she loves to be the center of attention. One example: One day, she sat down in a chair and immediately started to panic that she could not get out of the chair due to her size (she's overweight). My husband and other friends were taken aback because it was visibly clear that she wasn't stuck. She demanded that someone help her get up, and it was embarrassing to watch.

Also, if she doesn't get her way, she resorts to talking like a baby or making a scene. She constantly complains about being sick. It happens every time she isn't the center of attention. My husband and I and another couple are getting fed up being around her. My husband has been best friends with Earl since they were kids, so this is a tough situation. I'd love some advice.

HARD TO BEAR IN THE SOUTH

DEAR ABBY

By Abigail Van Buren
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

DEAR HARD TO BEAR: Not all friendships last forever. The solution to your problem may be as simple as making yourself less available. Because your husband is on the same page as you and the other couple, it shouldn't be too hard to start seeing Earl and Simone less often. When the men want to get together, they can do it without you. Try it, and it may bring you some relief.

■ ■ ■

To receive a collection of Abby's most memorable – and most frequently requested – poems and essays, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby – Keepers Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

EVERYBODY SEEKS HAPPINESS! NOT ME, THOUGH! THAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ME AND THE REST OF THE WORLD!
HAPPINESS ISN'T GOOD ENOUGH FOR ME! I DEMAND EUPHORIA!
THE PROBLEM WITH YOU, HOBBES, IS YOU'RE ALWAYS AT A LOSS FOR WORDS.
I'VE FOUND THAT SAVES MANY A FRIENDSHIP.

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

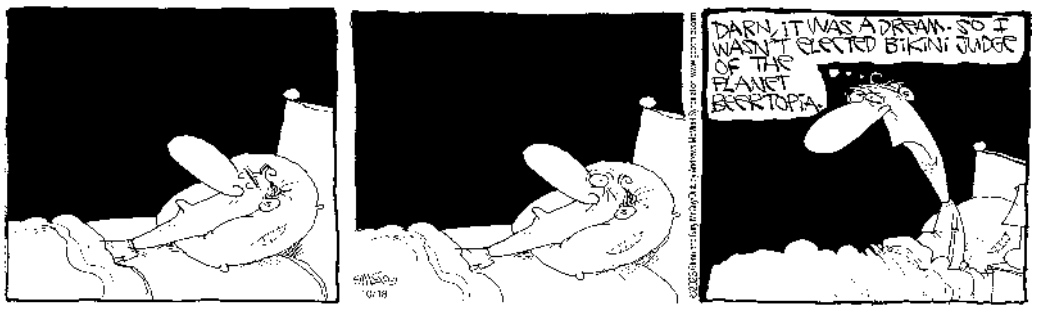
"DEAR ASK A DOG, HOW ARE YOU TODAY?"
BARK! BARK! BARK! BARK! BARK! BARK!
I DON'T UNDERSTAND THE ANSWER
OKAY, THIS WAS A BAD IDEA
JIM DAVIS 10-18

Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS
1 Treaty
5 — Jima
8 Skirt feature
12 Job-safety org.
13 Part of DJIA
14 Ritzy
15 Resign
17 Advocacy org.
18 Photo-copier need
19 Added alcohol
21 Stagger
24 Connec-tions
25 Novelist Oz
28 Stallion's mate
30 Bit of ink
33 "Lion" star Patel
34 Marathon stats
35 Conceit
36 Flamenco cheer
37 Slightly
38 Lovers' quarrel
39 "May-berry —"
41 Peregri-nate
43 Electric cars
46 "The Lion King" lion
50 Italian wine region
51 Members of blended families
54 "Got it"
55 "Little piggie"
56 Pesky insect
57 Cuts off
58 Note after fa
59 "May It Be" singer

DOWN
1 Blog entry
2 Re-garding
3 Olympic skater Nathan
4 Becomes narrower
5 Altar affirma-tive
6 Dazzle
7 Has
8 Iberian nation
9 Rigid confor-mity
10 Cruise stop
11 Dull sound of impact
16 Dad on "Black-ish"
20 Bakery buys
22 Send forth
23 Truman's birthplace
25 Ruckus
26 Podcaster and moti-vational speaker — Robbins
27 Go too far
29 Decorate anew
31 Turkish title
32 Young-ster
34 "There!"
38 Wee bit
40 Travels by jet
42 Nile reptile
43 Shadow
44 Old U.S. gas brand
45 Bygone fleet
47 Educator Horace
48 Party time, briefly
49 Hammett pooch
52 Overly
53 Slithery fish

Solution time: 23 mins.

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			I	H	Y		I	R	A	N	C	E
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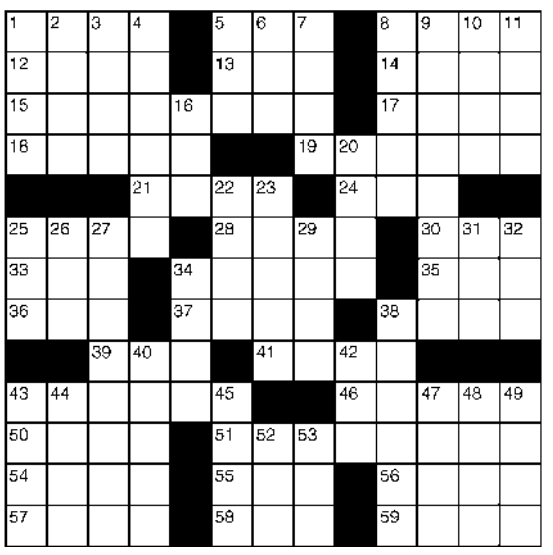
B	O	E	R		U	M	A		R	I	T	A
A	L	E	S		P	A	Y		A	C	L	U

Yesterday's answer 10-18



STUMPED? For answers lo today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18÷ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Zac Efron, 36; Esperanza Spalding, 39; Freida Pinto, 39; Wynton Marsalis, 62.

Happy Birthday: Bide your time, take care of details, and refuse to let emotions or outside interference cloud your vision or disrupt your plans. Embrace domestic changes that help stabilize your financial situation and give you breathing space to enjoy your life and loved ones and to acquire peace of mind. Your security depends on making intelligent decisions, avoiding unnecessary expenses and taking advantage of financial opportunities. Your numbers are 4, 17, 22, 25, 34, 46, 48.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19):* Search for the information you need to validate what you want to pursue. Knowledge is vital when it comes to getting what you want. Don't forgo what's necessary; a safety check, verification or promo code will make a difference and save time and money. ✪✪✪✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20):* Don't give up on your dreams prematurely. Look into the cost involved and consider the difference it can make to your life before deciding to move. Having a plan ready to go when opportunity knocks will encourage success. ✪✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20):* Review every detail before presenting your offer. Someone will look for any reason to redirect or take advantage of you. Attend a seminar, talk to experts and devise a solid plan to avoid unnecessary setbacks. ✪✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22):* Don't start something without getting the go-ahead from anyone who may object. Having the proper documents or a blessing from a neighbor, colleague or loved one will determine your success. An incentive or perk will help move your plans forward. ✪✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22):* Put on blinders and focus on what you are trying to achieve. Don't let anyone redirect or tempt you to point your attention to something that isn't directly beneficial. Invest your time and money in yourself, your skills and your long-term plans. ✪✪✪✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* Look to experts, institutions and self-reliance for answers, and make changes that will help you turn something you enjoy doing or excel at into something lucrative. Someone you encounter will inspire you, but verify the information you receive before you proceed. ✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* Monitor situations before engaging in talks that prompt changes you aren't ready to accept. Take time to digest what's available and devise a way to get the most out of what you've got before you move. Patience is favored. ✪✪✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* Follow the money, evaluate every expenditure and sell what you no longer need. A tight budget and game plan for prospects will put you in a good position. Discipline and ingenuity combined will create opportunities and a positive lifestyle change. ✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* Don't share personal information. Hide your true feelings from anyone who might take advantage of your vulnerability. Listen carefully to what's said and act accordingly. A poker face will help you navigate your way past anyone trying to get in your way. ✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* Pay attention to contract negotiations and medical issues. Ask questions and look for alternatives that suit your lifestyle. An opportunity to gain financial ground is apparent if you make domestic changes that lower your monthly payments. A unique investment will encourage long-term growth. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* Concentrate on what's at stake, and do whatever it takes to live up to your promises. A simple lifestyle will help you save and have better stability. Refuse to let anyone convince you to take on debt or make a questionable professional move. ✪✪✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20):* Don't believe everything you hear or get involved in someone else's dream. Focus on what brings you the highest return. Put your emotions aside and adopt ideas that are dependent on you and your skills, not paying someone to do things for you. ✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are hesitant, systematic and persistent. You are resourceful and dedicated.

✪: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ✪✪: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ✪✪✪: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ✪✪✪✪: Aim high; start new projects. ✪✪✪✪✪: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

7	9		4	5				1
		2			3	6	7	
								8
9						4	6	7
				4		5		9
			6		9	8	3	
6	3		1					
	2				4			6
		1			8	7		

Difficulty: ★★★ 10/18

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

8	2	4	7	6	5	9	1	3
3	7	5	9	1	2	8	6	4
9	6	1	8	4	3	7	5	2
6	8	7	5	3	1	4	2	9
5	4	3	2	9	8	6	7	1
1	9	2	4	7	6	3	8	5
7	3	6	1	2	4	5	9	8
2	5	9	3	8	7	1	4	6
4	1	8	6	5	9	2	3	7

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the **WONDERWORD.**

LEMON TREES Solution: 9 letters

E	A	F	R	U	I	T	R	O	P	I	C	A	L	P
U	R	B	R	A	N	C	H	A	R	V	E	S	T	O
R	I	U	N	R	E	M	A	K	L	O	V	D	F	B
E	Z	T	T	K	E	P	F	G	R	O	C	E	R	Y
K	O	E	A	A	U	A	R	H	E	A	T	A	E	C
A	N	B	D	L	R	O	U	N	D	A	Z	T	S	A
O	A	A	P	M	Y	E	B	E	M	I	L	O	H	R
N	O	B	S	I	L	E	P	I	L	L	I	O	S	E
E	N	O	U	B	V	R	L	M	E	Y	E	R	G	W
G	E	O	N	E	U	C	S	W	E	E	T	A	K	E
A	E	N	R	N	I	S	A	V	O	T	I	O	C	A
R	R	A	I	D	R	T	H	S	E	L	S	I	I	T
D	G	N	I	A	E	P	I	R	O	R	L	A	P	H
E	G	C	E	R	I	N	D	F	A	S	N	E	T	E
N	A	B	C	A	L	I	F	O	R	N	I	A	Y	R

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Acidic, Arizona, Baboon, Bake, Bearss, Beverage, Branch, Brazil, Bush, California, Care, Climate, Eureka, Farm, Foliage, Fresh, Fruit, Garden, Genoa, Green, Grocery, Harvest, Heat, Italy, Lime, Lisbon, Mead, Meyer, Pick, Pruning, Pulp, Rind, Ripe, Root, Round, Slice, Soil, Sun, Sweet, Taste, Temperature, Tropical, Verna, Volkamer, Water, Weather, Yellow

Yesterday's Answer: Notified

The NEW **Wonderword Grand Millennium #1** in LARGE PRINT is now available at www.WonderWordBooks.com or call 1-800-642-6480. (In Canada, call 1-856-232-2367)

Harper homers on 31st birthday as Phillies beat D-backs in Game 1

AP

Philadelphia Phillies' Bryce Harper celebrates after a home run against the Arizona Diamondbacks during the =1- inning in Game 1 of the baseball NL Championship Series in Philadelphia, Monday, Oct. 16, 2023.

PHILADELPHIA (AP)—Bryce Harper celebrated his 31st birthday with a bang — a 420-foot homer on the first pitch he saw in the NL Championship Series.

That merited a special tribute. As he rounded third base, the Philadelphia Phillies slugger concocted a celebration on the fly: Harper held up three fingers on his left hand and one on his right and pretended to blow them out like candles on a cake as he crossed the plate.

"Sometimes I just do stuff, and that felt right," Harper said. "So I thought I would step on home plate and do that."

Harper keeps rising to the moment in October, helping the Phillies take another step toward winning their first World Series title since 2008.

The two-time NL MVP launched his 10th postseason homer with Philadelphia, Kyle Schwarber hit his first of this postseason and Nick Castellanos also went deep again to power the Phillies past the Arizona Diamondbacks 5-3 in Game 1 of the NLCS on Monday night.

Harper also walked, scored twice and knocked in two runs to send the Phillies to their 10th straight home playoff win against NL teams.

"This guy, he is looking for the moment, and he wants it," Schwarber said. "He's doing such an unbelievable job for us. Talking about when he is going up to the plate, you are just thinking that he is going to do something special every single time. Can that be unfair to have an expectation on a player? Sure. But that's what everyone is thinking when you're in the dugout. Man, what's this guy going to do next?"

The same could be said about Zack Wheeler after another stellar postseason outing.

Wheeler struck out eight in six innings to help the defending National League champions win their seventh Game 1 of the last two postseasons. Wheeler sawed two bats in half during the first two innings, leaving the Diamondbacks with more pieces of busted lumber than hits through five.

José Alvarado got four clutch outs on 15 pitches and Craig Kimbrel worked a scoreless ninth for the save.

Arizona was stuck with its first loss of the playoffs after ripping off five straight wins against the Brewers and Dodgers.

The Diamondbacks were simply the latest team to unravel under the red storm of 45,396 towel-waving fans at Citizens Bank Park. The Phillies never gave the crowd a reason to stop cheering—or Arizona a chance to catch its breath until it was too late.

Schwarber started the home run derby when he launched Zac Gallen's first pitch 420 feet into the right-field seats. There was some minor consternation that Schwarber—with 47 homers this season and 93 over the last two—had yet to go deep through six playoff games. How easy it was to forget that Schwarber didn't hit any in the Wild Card Series or NLDS last season before he launched six in the NLCS and World Series. So those Schwarbombs might just be getting started.

"That's what he does at the start of the game," Phillies manager Rob Thomson said. "He can put the other team on their heels a little bit and get the lead. And we added on tonight."

Four pitches later, Harper homered to right-center—the first time in 127 postseason games Philadelphia went deep twice in the first inning.

"I think they just ambushed him," Diamondbacks manager Torey Lovullo said.

When Castellanos lined his fifth homer of the playoffs in the second—all in the past three games—it gave the Phillies 32 home runs in 13 postseason games at Citizens Bank Park over the last two years.

The Kelce Bros approved. Chiefs tight end Travis Kelce—minus celebrity friend Taylor Swift—and Eagles center Jason Kelce went wild. Travis pointed to his brother as Jason pounded a beer in their suite.

Gallen, a South Jersey native, had his name derisively drawn out to "Galll-ennnn" by Phillies fans each time the 17-game winner got into a jam. Too many times, for Arizona.

"That's an aggressive lineup," Gallen said. "It's no secret, they try to get the crowd into it as early as possible and that plays into the aggression. Schwarber and Bryce were just looking for fastballs. They got 'em in locations they could handle."

Trea Turner hit a one-double in the third, leaving first base open. Gallen pitched to Harper instead of walking him and got burned by an RBI single for a 4-0 lead.

J.T. Realmuto added an RBI single in the fifth.

Those runs proved crucial for the Phillies. Geraldo Perdomo hit a two-run homer off Wheeler in the sixth that made it 5-2.

Seranthony Domínguez opened the door in the seventh for the Diamondbacks when his throwing error on a comebacker led to an unearned run. Alvarado retired pinch-hitter Emmanuel Rivera on a groundout to keep it 5-3 and tossed a scoreless eighth.

The Diamondbacks, who at 84-78 squeezed into the playoffs as the final NL wild card, were held to four hits. Corbin Carroll and Ketel Marte both went 1 for 4 and Christian Walker and Lourdes Gurriel Jr. were hitless. Gurriel grounded into a game-ending double play.

"There's a portion of our lineup that was fairly silent that is very capable of carrying this ballclub," Lovullo said. "With Zac giving up five runs and that part of the lineup, you know, possibly not contributing the way they normally have or can, it tells me a lot about this team that we're balanced, and we can be dangerous."

Schwarber's fourth leadoff homer in the postseason moved him past Jimmy Rollins and Derek Jeter for most in baseball history.

Harper joined St. Louis' Kolten Wong, Tampa Bay's Evan Longoria and Kansas City's Willie Aikens as the only players in postseason history to homer on his birthday.

Castellanos' five homers in his last three postseason game—he hit two in consecutive games against Atlanta—made him the second player to hit those marks. New York Yankees slugger Reggie Jackson did it in the 1977 World Series.

RANGERS 5, ASTROS 4

HOUSTON (AP)—No matter the place or the moment, the Texas Rangers are rolling right now.

Jonah Heim homered, Nathan Eovaldi pitched six effective innings and Texas beat Framber Valdez and the Houston Astros 5-4 on Monday for a 2-0 lead in the AL Championship Series.

The Rangers improved to 7-0 in the playoffs, including six wins on the road. They swept the Rays in the Wild Card Series and the Orioles in the Division Series, and then posted a 2-0 win at Houston in the ALCS opener.

"It's just baseball to us," Texas third baseman Josh Jung said. "We're jumping on teams early, and that helps us settle in. Our pitching has been outstanding. You can't ask for anything more than what they've given us."

Adolis García, Mitch Garver and Nathaniel Lowe each hit an RBI single during Texas' four-run first inning against Valdez, and José Leclerc closed it out for the Rangers after Yordan Alvarez powered an Astros rally.

Eovaldi struck out nine, including two in a row after Houston loaded the bases with none out in the fifth. He was charged with three runs and five hits in his third win this postseason.

"You're talking about one of the elite pitchers in the game," Texas manager Bruce Bochy said. "They have that ability to turn up a notch when they had to. We made an error, bases loaded, and it's about picking each other up, and he picked us up there and made great pitches."

Game 3 of the best-of-seven series is Wednesday night in Arlington.

The Rangers are the fifth team in MLB history and first since the Astros last season to win their first seven postseason games. Kansas City holds the record with an eight-game win streak to start the 2014 postseason.

The six straight road playoff wins by the Rangers is tied for the second-longest such streak in MLB history, behind an eight-game streak by the Yankees in 1996.

Alvarez hit two solo drives to become the sixth player in MLB history to have two multihomer games in one postseason. The second one was off Aroldis Chapman, trimming Houston's deficit to 5-4 with two out in the eighth.

Leclerc then came in and walked José Abreu and Michael Brantley, but Chas McCormick grounded out to end the threat.

Jeremy Peña flied out to deep right field for the first out in the Houston ninth. Yainer Diaz then grounded out and Jose Altuve flied to center, giving Leclerc his second save of the series.

The Astros, who went 39-42 at home in the regular season, continued to struggle at Minute Maid Park. The defending champions fell to 1-3 at home in the playoffs this year.

The Rangers jumped all over Valdez. Marcus Semien smacked the first pitch to center field for a single. Corey Seager singled to left on the second pitch before Valdez made two errors on one play.

Valdez bobbled a chopper hit by Robbie Grossman for an error that allowed him to reach first and Semien to score. His second error occurred when he badly overthrew first to move Grossman to second and Seager to third.

Valdez put his hands on his knees and shook his head at the end of the play.

García then hit a liner to right field to score Seager. Garver singled home another run before Valdez finally got his first out when he struck out Heim.

The Rangers weren't done yet.

Lowe singled on a ground ball to left to make it 4-0. Valdez retired the next two batters to end the inning.

"I thought my pitches were good," he said through a translator. "Maybe they got a little bit lucky. There were a couple of balls that weren't hit that well for base hits."

Alex Bregman also homered for the Astros, who went 0 for 6 with runners in scoring position. Alvarez, who is dealing with an illness, looked much better than he did in Game 1 when he went 0 for 4 with three strikeouts.

He said he was feeling good Monday and deflected questions about his health.

"It was just something personal," he said through a translator. "I don't know how that got out. It didn't come from me or the team."

Valdez (0-2) allowed seven hits and five runs—four earned—in 2 2/3 innings in his second loss this postseason. It was his shortest start of the season.

The Astros missed a huge opportunity in the fifth. Brantley and McCormick hit back-to-back singles to open the inning before Peña reached on an error by Jung.

But Eovaldi escaped by striking out pinch-hitter Diaz and Altuve before Bregman grounded out.

"When I was ahead 1-2 (on Altuve) and I went with a high fastball and followed it up with the splitter. You're close but you're not out of the woods yet because Bregman is equally as talented," Eovaldi said. "I was able to make a good pitch and get us out of the jam, and I felt like that was one of the turning points of the game."

Alvarez walked with one out in the sixth before scoring on a two-out double by Brantley. Alvarez also hit a leadoff homer in the second into the second deck in right field.

Heim homered high off the wall in left field to push the lead to 5-1 with no outs in the third.

Prescott, Cowboys rally in fourth for a 20-17 victory over Chargers

INGLEWOOD, Calif. (AP)—Fans and some players might roll their eyes when a Week 6 game is described as a must win.

That doesn't matter to Dak Prescott

After playing one of the worst games of his eight-year career last week and with a bye week on the horizon, Prescott went into Monday night's game against the Los Angeles Chargers knowing anything other than victory would be detrimental to the Cowboys' hopes of contending for an NFC title.

Prescott responded by throwing for 272 yards and a touchdown as Dallas rallied in the fourth quarter for a 20-17 victory.

"It was a must win. There's a big difference between 4-2 and 3-3," said Prescott, who completed 21 of 30 passes and also had a rushing TD. "We talked after last week about not allowing this thing to landslide. When you get this win like we did, we can definitely move on."

AP

Dallas Cowboys quarterback Dak Prescott (4) celebrates a touchdown during the first half of an NFL football game against the Los Angeles Chargers, Monday, Oct. 16, 2023, in Inglewood, Calif.

The Cowboys—coming off a 42-10 loss at San Francisco on Oct. 8—continue to prove they don't let losses fester. They improved to 10-1 in weeks following a loss since the start of the 2021 season.

"There's plays that needed to be made, especially down the stretch," Cowboys coach Mike McCarthy said. "A lot of back and forth, a lot of resetting your jaw and just keep fighting, and I thought our men did a really good job there."

Prescott became the 30th quarterback in NFL history to throw at least one touchdown pass against 31-or-more opponents when he connected with Brandin Cooks for a 2-yard score with 11:19 remaining in the game to give the Cowboys a 17-10 lead.

"Dak did a lot of great things," said Cowboys receiver CeeDee Lamb, who had seven receptions for 117 yards. "He improvised a lot, gave us the ability to do our work down the field."

Prescott showed off his running ability midway through the first quarter when he faked a handoff on fourth-and-1 and went up the middle for an 18-yard touchdown to tie the game at 7-7. It was the longest rushing touchdown of Prescott's eight-year career.

"We had CeeDee in motion as an option. The defensive end took out Tony and two other guys ran toward CeeDee just allowing me to cut up field," said Prescott, who also had 40 rushing yards on seven carries. "I have not been showing my legs early in the year so that might have played a part in it."

Los Angeles tied it at 17 with 7:11 remaining when Gerald Everett caught a 1-yard touchdown pass from Justin Herbert.

Brandon Aubrey made two field goals, including a 39-yarder with 2:19 remaining, to give the Cowboys the lead.

The Chargers (2-3) had one last chance to send it into overtime or win, but Stephon Gilmore picked off Herbert at the LA 33-yard line with 1:22 remaining to seal the victory. On the play immediately before the pick, Herbert was sacked by Micah Parsons for an 8-yard loss.

"We fell short, and I've got to make more plays as a quarterback," said Herbert, who was 22 of 37 for 227 yards with two touchdowns and an interception. "I missed a couple of receivers, threw some bad passes. There was a lot left out there, so there's a lot to work on, and a lot to improve on."

The Chargers started off well when they scored on their opening drive for the second straight game as Allen caught a 1-yard pass from Herbert on third-and-goal. Allen finished with seven catches for 85 yards.

Los Angeles had a chance to tie or take the lead on the opening drive of the third quarter, but Herbert was unable to complete it to Joshua Palmer in the end zone on fourth-and-1 at the Cowboys 7.

"I thought we were really good most of the night on third down. I thought we pressured the quarterback at a high level, but Dak made a couple of plays on that last drive, and it hurt us," Chargers coach Brandon Staley said.

Cooks' touchdown was set up by a 60-yard reception by Pollard on the first play of the fourth quarter.

Prescott scrambled out of pressure on third-and-11 at the Dallas 24 and completed a short pass to Pollard at the 32. Pollard then spun out of a tackle by Chargers cornerback Michael Davis at the 40 and appeared as if he would score a touchdown until he was brought down by Asante Samuel at the Chargers 16.

"The throw to Pollard is one of those fluke plays off the scramble where we have him, and you give credit to Dak for making a big play," Staley said.

The Chargers tied it in the fourth quarter when they took over on the Cowboys 20 after a muffed punt.

Dallas' Jalen Tolbert thought KaVontae Turpin got his hand on the ball, but Tolbert was the first to touch it. He fumbled and Chargers linebacker Amen Ogbongbemiga recovered it.

It was originally called a downed punt, but it was reversed after the Chargers challenged the call.

Browns' top-rated defense shows fight from warmups to finish in flattening touted 49ers

CLEVELAND (AP)—As Myles Garrett left Cleveland Browns Stadium, the All-Pro defensive end had an autographed jersey given to him by San Francisco's All-Pro left tackle Trent Williams draped over his right shoulder.

Call it a big game trophy.

Cleveland's tenacious defense is collecting them.

The Browns took down one of the NFL's top teams Sunday, limiting the 49ers' potent offense to just 215 yards — their fewest in 104 games under coach Kyle Shanahan — while ending San Francisco's regular-season winning streak at 15 and rattling quarterback Brock Purdy in his first loss as a starter.

San Francisco came averaging 33.4 points per game, and the Niners were flying high after thrashing Dallas a week ago.

The Browns knocked them back a peg or two.

Sure, it took a missed field goal in the final seconds to seal Cleveland's 19-17 win, and the 49ers were without dynamic playmakers Christian McCaffrey and Deebo Samuel for most of the second half. But the Browns (3-2), despite some major injuries and self-inflicted drama surrounding quarterback Deshaun Watson's bruised shoulder, found a way.

They're playing like contenders, and their top-ranked defense is setting the tone.

Through five games, the Browns have allowed fewer yards (1,002) than any team since 1971. Only the the '71 Baltimore Colts (836) and 1970 Minnesota Vikings (945) — the famed Purple People Eaters — yielded less than this Cleveland defense.

Fiery first-year coordinator Jim Schwartz has adjusted Cleveland's defensive schemes and the team's attitude.

Not only does Schwartz have the Browns playing at a high level and celebrating every tackle, deflection and sack as if they won the Super Bowl, he has got them believing they can take it up another notch.

"We say it all the time," cornerback Greg Newsome II said. "We're the best in the world as a defense."

Schwartz spent part of the week preparing Cleveland's defense for the 49ers by showing the Browns some famous boxing matches, including Ali-Frazier and Hagler-Hearns. Schwartz wanted his players to be able to punch and counter punch anything San Francisco might throw at them.

He expected a fight, and got one.

However, Schwartz couldn't have known it would start in pregame warmups when the Browns took exception to some trash talk and taunting from the Niners as dozens of players scuffled near San Francisco's sideline.

"Those guys just came out trying to be disrespectful," said cornerback Denzel Ward. "We just got zero tolerance level for disrespect. They wanted to make it a fist fight and we're going to come out swinging."

Cornerback Martin Emerson Jr., who intercepted Purdy in the third quarter, said the Niners picked on the wrong team.

"Don't poke the bear," he said. "Don't get us started. We don't take any disrespect."

The Browns took their emotions out on Purdy, who came in with the league's best rating (123.1) but went just 12 for 27 for 125 yards and was sacked three times. The 23-year-old felt the sting of defeat for the first time as a pro.

And while it felt like a statement to the rest of the league, Garrett insists the Browns aren't trying to prove themselves to anyone.

"We know who we are," he said. "And we're going to continue to ball."

WHAT'S WORKING

Concerns were eased that Cleveland's running game would disintegrate after star back Nick Chubb suffered a season-ending knee injury in Week 2.

Despite not having All-Pro left guard Joel Bitonio, the Browns rushed for 160 yards and showed some imagination with mis-directions and reverses. Cleveland's lone touchdown came on a 16-yard run after tight end Harrison Bryant took the snap and pitched the ball to Kareem Hunt.

WHAT NEEDS HELP

As great as it has been, Cleveland's defense needs to force more turnovers.

The Browns were the first team to intercept Purdy this season, but Cleveland again lost the turnover battle and is now minus-8 in differential this season.

Penalties were also a problem Sunday as the Browns committed a season-high 13 for 119 yards. Two personal fouls helped the Niners score a TD on their opening drive.

STOCK UP

It would have been foolish to expect quarterback P.J. Walker to come off Cleveland's practice squad and outplay Purdy, an early season MVP candidate.

But that's exactly what the 28-year-old did while filling in for Watson. Walker made just enough plays to lead the Browns to the shocking win. Walker got away with a couple ill-advised throws, but he also rebounded from a late interception to lead the Browns on two late drives that led to field goals.

If Watson misses more time, Walker has at least shown the Browns he can get the job done.

STOCK DOWN

Each week, fourth-year wide receiver Donovan Peoples-Jones seems to have a lesser role in Cleveland's offense.

He was targeted just once Sunday and didn't have a catch. Through five games, he has only six receptions for 75 yards. Also, he was replaced as Cleveland's primary punt returner by Jaelon Darden, who was elevated from the practice squad.

For 4 rising NBA stars, about $1B in extensions leads to rising expectations

By TIM REYNOLDS
AP BASKETBALL WRITER

AP

Minnesota Timberwolves' Anthony Edwards dribble the ball during a preseason NBA basketball game between the Dallas Mavericks and Minnesota Timberwolves in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, Saturday, Oct. 7, 2023.

Indiana's Tyrese Haliburton got questions about the same topic more often than he could remember this summer: The money, the money, the money.

As NBA salaries grow, so too does the spotlight for those who get the biggest paychecks—a club that players like Haliburton, Minnesota's Anthony Edwards, Charlotte's LaMelo Ball and Memphis' Desmond Bane will soon be entering for the first time as their rookie deals wind down.

Those four players all signed extensions this summer that will kick in next year; the deals for Haliburton, Edwards and Ball are guaranteed to be worth at least $205 million with a chance of reaching around $260 million if they qualify for supermax-level paydays. Bane's is guaranteed at around $198 million, with about $8 million more available in incentives. Add it up, and those four players might be making about $1 billion combined during the span of those new deals.

And now comes the next challenge: Living up to the expectations that come with that much money. There are players with bigger salaries, even players with larger extensions—for example, Boston's Jaylen Brown signed one that could be worth $304 million this summer. But for players like Haliburton, Edwards, Ball and Bane, this is a new chapter.

"When I got the deal, you're like, 'What's next?' and you realize you've got to prove it," Haliburton said. "The Pacers organization has invested a lot in me, a lot of time and obviously a lot of money. The only way for me to repay that is to make them believe they made the right choice, both now and 20 years from now."

To put the rookie extensions of this era in perspective and how much salaries have soared, consider that Stephen Curry's first extension after his rookie deal was worth $44 million—total. Haliburton, Edwards, Ball and Bane will average about that much in annual salary for the foreseeable future starting in the 2024-25 season. (Edwards will make about $13.5 million this season, Ball about $11 million, Haliburton about $6 million and Bane around $3.9 million.)

Raptors seek dismissal of lawsuit by Knicks

The Toronto Raptors seek dismissal of a lawsuit filed by the New York Knicks that says the Raptors—including new head coach Darko Rajakovic—conspired to steal thousands of videos and scouting files through a former Knicks employee.

The initial lawsuit the Knicks filed in Manhattan federal court seeks unspecified damages and a ban on the further spread of the Knicks' trade secrets. The Raptors called the Knicks' lawsuit "baseless" and "a public relations stunt by the Knicks" in a court filing on Monday.

The Knicks said the theft occurred after the Raptors hired and recruited "a mole"—identified in the lawsuit as Ikechukwu Azotam—within the Knicks organization. The lawsuit said Azotam had directed the planning, organizing and distribution of all video scouting responsibilities for the Knicks' coaching staff since August 2021 before leaving the team this August.

The Knicks lawsuit said on Aug. 11, Azotam sent two emails from his Knicks email address to his new Raptors email address containing "proprietary information with highly confidential material."

The Knicks blamed Rajakovic, player development coach Noah Lewis, the Raptors' parent company—Maple Leaf Sports & Entertainment Ltd.—and 10 unidentified Raptors employees, saying that they received proprietary information and sometimes directed Azotam to misuse his access to Knicks information.

"As we have previously stated, given the theft of proprietary and confidential files and clear violation of criminal and civil law, we were left no choice but to take this to federal court and are confident the judicial system will agree," a spokesman for Madison Square Garden Sports said in a statement.

The lawsuit said the Raptors employees had directed Azotam to misuse his access to a Knicks subscription to Synergy Sports to create and transfer for their use over 3,000 files consisting of film information and data, including 3,358 video files. The Raptors' employees had accessed the stolen files more than 2,000 times, the lawsuit said.

The Raptors said the lawsuit doesn't make sense and note that the Knicks have agreed that commissioner Adam Silver has jurisdiction over such cases. The Raptors also said the broad scope of the Knicks' complaint would make a resolution in court unlikely before 2025. ***(AP)***

PRIORITY

From page 20

tried to cut the lead as much as he could with help from Jonel Palima, but King bounced back and became a net magnet again.

Homesmart was down by just 10 points heading into the third quarter until King continued his trek to over 40 points in the game. With great passes by his teammates and Homesmarts' faltering defense, Priority Care's lead grew, 63-47.

In the end, Palima nearly succeeded in taking the win away with his 34 points and Victoria's 33 markers, but King's 43 big ones and Matt Duenas' 16 points overpowered them to win by just a 6-point margin.

After their game, Loving Hands defeated Socho, 60-48, for the playoff spot against Winners Group.

It was definitely a fight to the finish to see who wanted to stay in contention as both teams brought out their firepower from the get-go.

A slim, 3-point lead by Loving Hands in the first half turned into a 6-point lead by the end of the third quarter thanks to Loving Hands' Jude Tengco and Carlos Elchico.

Loving Hands' defense tightened up just as Socho's offense slipped which caused a ripple effect of consistent baskets by Loving Hands. Meanwhile, Socho was reduced to just 16 points and Loving Hands exploded for 22 points in the last quarter.

Tengco ended up with 12 points, while Rafael Ordona and Elchico provided 10 markers each. Socho's Derek Olopai was the lone ranger in double digits with 12 points, while Timmy Pangelinan racked up 9 makers.

LEIGH GASES

Homesmart is out of contention after losing a close game in the playoffs of the Open Division A in the Inaugural SMEC-SMLEG Invitational Basketball Tournament at the Gualo Rai Basketball Court Monday night.

First Game

Priority Care 83 – King 43, Duenas 16, Agulto 10, Taimanao 4, Manglona 4, Elameto 2, Mafnas 2, Pelisamen 2.

Home Smart 77 – Palima 34, Victoria 33, Dionicio 6, Castro 2, Jumaquio 2.

Scoring by quarters: 18-10, 43-34, 63-47, 83-77.

Second Game

Loving Hands 60 – Tengco 12, Ordona 10, Elchico 10, Bravo 8, Bernardo 8, Lisua 6, Tabora 3, Dancel 2, Bahillo 1.

Socho 48 – Olopai 12, Pangelinan 9, Sambile 8, Q. Faisao 8, Babauta 3, Hocog 2, D. Faisao 2, Guerrero 2.

Scoring by quarters: 12-9, 22-19, 38-32, 60-48.

REALISTIC

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Games is "an entirely new beast as opposed to the Mini Games, and so this will be a great opportunity to test all of our athletes and see where we stand regionally speaking."

Gross was appointed as chef de mission about this time last year and said with his role throughout the year, he's been in meetings, and has had consultations with all the teams and national federations that are going. He said sports manuals have already been published and released and are now being looked over.

He said, "My work really kicks in upon arrival in the Solomon Islands as head of delegation, in helping out the NMI and making sure that our athletes are taken care of and that anything we need is hopefully addressed, so that all of our teams and athletes can focus on their competition. I'm the guy that's helping to make sure there's no distractions."

The following athletes are representing 10 sports at the Games. For football, or soccer, it has the most delegates with 30, but per regulation, the final roster cannot be named yet. Team pools have not yet been determined for soccer.

Va'a has the second most athletes with 16. They include Oliver Igisaiar, Tyler Andrew, Yu Chai, Michael Peters, Terry Ruben, Willie Cabrera, Mitchell Kukkun, Guillerma Chong, Vinalynn Oronigo, Jenisha Dubrall, Ashley Pangelinan, Dayna Macaranas, Gracie Mendiola, Eva Weaver, Sakurako Halstead, Momoka Halstead, along with coach and athlete Jason Tarkong, assistant coach and athlete Richard Sikkel, and team managers Justin Andrew and Joseph Weaver.

Swimming has 15 athletes including Jinie Thompson, Andrew Nunez, Frances Raho, Isaiah Aleksenko, Juhn Tenorio, Julia Jinang, Kean Pajarillaga, Kevin Guerrero Jr., Kouki Watanabe, Maria Batallones, Michael Miller, Moshe Sikkel, Nagi Tenorio, Taiyo Akimaru, Shoko Litulumar, along with coaches Richard Sikkel and Hiroyuki Kimura and team manager Yuko Kimura.

Golf consists of Joe "Kamikaze" Camacho, Joseph Sasamoto, Ben Jones Jr., Franco Santos, Zhimin Jin, along with player/coach Kaegel Taitano and team manager Marco Peter.

Athletics is made up of Tania Tan, Lyle Andrew, Maria Quitugua, Theodore Rodgers, Alexander Camacho, Casey Cruz and Pony Tang along with team officials Simon Necesito and Greg Iginoef.

Weightlifting includes Angel San Nicolas, Joey Colisao, Antonette Labausa, Riella Ann Ichiuo, Leowell Cristobal, and Raymond Santos along with team manager Greg Borja.

Tennis is made up of Moris Villanueva, June Yu, Nason Wessel, Simon Tang, and player/coach Colin Ramsey.

Beach volleyball includes Andrew Johnson and Logan Mister, with alternate players Tyce Mister and Chris Nelson.

Bodybuilding is the duo of Davy Laxa and Christina Tudela; and triathlon's representative is Leo Wania.

OGUMORO

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expenses (housing, meals, books, lab fees, etc).

Ogumoro said he is "very grateful for the recognition" after just a couple of years playing football.

Currently a junior at White Oak High School in North Carolina, Ogumoro recently had a game day visit at UNC and said, "It was a great experience from the time I arrived and throughout the gameday experience. I appreciate the staff for making it feel welcoming."

He received the gameday invite from Julian Rowe-Cohen, assistant director of Player Personnel for UNC. Ogumoro said the important takeaways he got from the visit was that "the staff members and coaching staff will step out their way to take care of you."

His father, Ambrose, said this of his son's recent offers, "He's excited about any offer he receives. He was overwhelmed with emotions and just again thankful and blessed that he's being given an opportunity to play at the next level."

As his parents, Ambrose said he and his wife, Mayumi, "are ecstatic that his hard work is being noticed and we're so very proud of his accomplishments so far."

Antoni, who has never played football until last season in his sophomore year, said he models his game after Penei Sewell from the Detroit Lions and Trent Williams of the San Francisco 49ers.

Despite never playing football before, he caught on quickly and was selected to play on the varsity team and was named the starter for both offense at tight end and defense at defensive end.

From there, he led his team to their first Conference Championship Title in 22 years. Also last school year, Antoni led his basketball team to their first Conference Championship title in 21 years.

Antoni Ogumoro's grandparents are Ambrosio Ogumoro and Felicidad Kaipat Ogumoro of Capital Hill and Rufino and Carol Aguon of Kagman.

Harper homers on 31st birthday as Phillies beat D-backs in Game 1.

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Saipan Tribune
Sports

For 4 rising NBA stars, about $1B in extensions leads to rising expectations.

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‘Realistic chance of podium finishes for NMI’

LEIGH GASES

Northern Marianas Sports Association president Jerry Tan thanks sponsors of Team Marianas and is joined by IT&E executive director Vivian Palacios, right, and athletes/coaches during a ceremony at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium last Friday.

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

Team NMI chef de mission Nick Gross is confident that there is a realistic chance of getting podium finishes in the 10 sports that over 100 NMI athletes are competing in at the 2023 Pacific Games in Honiara, Solomon Islands from Nov. 15 to Dec. 2.

With 24 countries competing, it is a much larger scale than last year’s Pacific Mini Games held in the NMI. Therefore, Gross said he doesn’t anticipate the number of medals won during the Mini Games, but that “coming off those successes, we have a very good shot at earning some medals, bringing back some hardware, and getting some podium finishes.”

On what sports he thinks the NMI will win, he said “I’m not going to speculate on specific sports because I think that all of our sports have the opportunity to do so on any given day, but the competition will certainly be fierce. “

He added that the Pacific

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Priority Care, Loving Hands draw 1st blood in playoffs

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

LEIGH GASES

Priority Care takes a break during their game for a quick group photo in the first playoff game of Open Division A in the Inaugural SMEC-SMLEG Invitational Basketball Tournament at the Gualo Rai Basketball Court Monday night.

Priority Care and Loving Hands drew first blood in the Open Division A playoffs of the Inaugural SMEC-SMLEG Invitational Basketball Tournament 2023 Monday night at the Gualo Rai Basketball Court.

Priority Care came out strong against Homesmart, 83-77, and clinched the playoff spot against Solid North.

On a thankfully clear evening, Priority Care and Homesmart got underway with the long-awaited playoff games of the dragged-out league. Priority Care’s Steve King started it off as usual with unchallenged buckets until they stalled at 15 points.

Homesmart was rooted in place and were down 3-15 but with a resurgence led by Jeff Victoria, the first quarter ended, 10-18.

King was the go-to man for Priority Care as always but missed some opportunities that Homesmart capitalized on in the second quarter. Victoria

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Ogumoro gets D1 scholarship offers

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

With football season in full swing, basketball player turned up-and-coming football star, CNMI son Antoni Ogumoro, is receiving college football scholarship offers left and right.

The 6’5” and 290-lb left tackle and defensive lineman received NCAA Division 1 college programs scholarship offers from University of North Carolina Chapel Hill, North Carolina State University, Old Dominion University, and East Carolina University last week. These programs are recruiting him as an offensive lineman.

All scholarships he’s received so far are full ride scholarships which entails covering all his college

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Antoni Ogumoro, right, poses for a photo with his father, Ambrose, during his game day visit to University of North Carolina Chapel Hill last week. Antoni was offered multiple NCAA Division 1 college football program scholarship offers, including UNC.